A RIPPLE, A WAVE

The story of union organization in the B.C. fishing industry

From a draft manuscript by GEORGE NORTH

revised and edited by HAROLD GRIFFIN

Fisherman Publishing Society
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Published by The Fisherman Publishing Society
138 East Cordova Street
Vancouver, B.C., V6A 1K9

First Printing, January, 1974

International Standard Book Number 0-919802-00-1

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Printed by Broadway Printers Ltd., Vancouver, B.C.

Introduction

The history of trade union organization in the British Columbia fishing industry is a fascinating story, only the outline of which can be told in these pages. The full record of the struggles for economic and social justice conducted by four generations of fishermen and other workers in the fishing industry is now being compiled. This, however, is a major undertaking, for it must be pieced together from old records, newspaper files and the personal recollections of scores of men and women who were part of past struggles.

Eventually the larger work will be completed. In the meantime, this brief account fills an immediate need, tracing as it does the history of organization from its beginnings on the Fraser River in the last century to formation of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union in 1945 and highlighting the achievements of that union over nearly three decades.

Confronted by a degree of monopoly control equalled in no other primary industry, denied by antiquated laws the basic rights long since won by other workers in the province, British Columbia fishermen, tendermen and shoreworkers have created, maintained and compelled recognition of an industrial union which is unique among fishermen's organizations on this continent. As the record shows, they can be proud of what they have accomplished for themselves and the contribution they have made to the larger movements for social progress.

In 1967 the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union established a history project to collect historical materials with a view to preparing a comprehensive history of trade union organization in the British Columbia fishing history. This outline story, the joint work of staff members of The Fisherman, past and present, is the first publication. The original manuscript was written by former editor George North and extended by former assistant editor Mike James. Subsequently it was extended further and edited by editor Harold (Hal) Griffin, who also designed the book.

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1. The Beginnings

When the miners of 1858 toiled their dangerous way up the Fraser River seeking wealth in yellow metal, they apparently were unaware of the great riches represented in the silvery sockeye, coho, pinks, chum, steelhead and spring salmon which annually struggled up the waterway.

Salmon — its largest species still referred to as "king" — not only has dominated the fishing industry in all economic aspects but has provided much of its colorful history. It is in the salmon section that great fortunes have been piled up by fishing companies. It was here that ruthless exploitation first brought trade union organization. It is in the salmon section that some of the province's greatest strikes have taken place. Other fisheries, notably halibut longlining and in more recent years, bottom fish trawling and herring seining, have contributed greatly to the color of the industry, but a century after the first commercial exploitation of the fishery, salmon continues to hold its place as British Columbia's most valuable fishery resource.

In buying A. Inglefield's salmon curing establishment at Annieville some time after it was advertised for sale in

May, 1865, James Syme opened the door to a new industry. Syme, lacking capital, gave up the business in 1869 after canning small amounts of quality salmon in the two previous years. His cannery, the first in the colony, was taken over and successfully operated by A. Loggie and Company in 1871, the same year that Capt. Edward Stamp started canning at Sapperton, above New Westminster.

From this feeble beginning with a total pack of perhaps 1,300 cases of one and two pound cans laboriously made by hand and cooked in boiling vats, the industry grew rapidly. Four canners put up 18,719 cases in 1874. A quarter century later, in 1901, 73 canners, two thirds of them on the Fraser, canned a million and a quarter cases, virtually all of it sockeye.

Unionism came formally but briefly to the industry in 1893 but not before harshly exploited Chinese cannery workers, whose labor was sold en bloc to companies by Chinese "contractors," struck at two Fraser canneries in 1881, apparently successfully. The *Victoria Colonist,* in typical chauvinistic exaggeration, lamented that "the canneries are at the mercy of the Chinese . . ." Militant Cowichan Indians, described by the same paper as "more tractable" but "more unreliable" than the Chinese, refused that same year to fish for T. Ladner's Delta Cannery at Ladner's Landing unless they received $3 a day.

Racism, under the guise of protectionism, which plagued and divided the west coast labor movement and reduced its effectiveness for several decades, played a part in formation of the first fishermen's union in 1893. The Fraser River Fishermen's Protective and Benevolent Association of British Columbia turned down membership for Japanese fishermen and also rejected an alternate proposal that Japanese form a separate local. Its policy was based on excluding them from the industry.

Despite these weaknesses, the union struck for 10 cents a sockeye for "independent" fishermen and $3 a day for Native Indian fishermen and $2.75 for their boat pullers fishing company gear, an increase of 75 cents a day. Canners broke the strike by means that since have become traditional. They published a series of inflammatory, misleading advertisements implying violence and threats of violence, compliant police arrested several

men and charged them with intimidation though no case was ever made against them, and Indian agents toured the Fraser urging Natives to ignore the union and go to work. Despite a strong position taken by Indian chiefs, the strike petered out, the men returning on the best terms they could get, the only certain gain being 25 cents in the daily rate for men fishing company gear.

The union appeared to rise and fall with the strike. The ensuing years to 1900 were marked by strikes at upcoast fishing areas which produced some victories and some defeats.

A Rivers Inlet strike in 1899 saw scabs imported from Vancouver without success, but on the Skeena River canners strongarmed Natives into fishing by refusing them passage on steamers they controlled and arranging fines of $50 and costs for strikers "using violence." On the Fraser the canners' policy was to offer attractive prices at season's opening and drastic cuts as the fish started to run, encouraging a sharp increase in the number of fishermen and a gradual phasing out of the daily wage system for gillnetters.

Aided by Vancouver Trades and Labor Council and growing partly from their continuing fight to restrict licences, New Westminster fishermen formed a union in late 1899. A few months later, Vancouver fishermen began organizing under largely militant leadership, headed by vice-president Frank Rogers. But despite their efforts to organize Japanese into the Vancouver group, a policy running counter to that of the earlier union, the Japanese formed their own association led by boss contractors, one of whom reputedly held interest in the Lighthouse Cannery. Operators had formally organized two years earlier.

Few fishermen went out when the 1900 season opened July 1, standing by the demand for 25 cents a sockeye backed by meetings of all groups. Canners offered 20 cents but made no commitment to carry it through the season. Patrol boats manned by crews of eight to 10 men including one Japanese, a strike kitchen at Steveston serving 200 to 300 meals a day, a system of food fishing on permit, and regular meetings testified to the efficient organization of the strike.

Canners countered with insistent demands for police protection for would-be scabs on the basis of spurious stories of threatened violence. Finally, the frustrated companies created an incident by sending two boats out fishing accompanied by a trio of cannery tugs, each carrying three special police. Union patrol men acted calmly — one of the scabs was publicly lectured by Rogers on a wharf at Steveston after being brought in — and all hell broke loose. Canners wired for help: Send the militia and the warship *Quadra* with armed and uniformed men to patrol, they pleaded. When Rogers was arrested, the Japanese voted to accept a company offer of 20 cents for the first 600 fish and 15 cents for any over that figure.

Unable to convince provincial authorities to call out the militia, canners did it themselves by using three justices of the peace — a cannery manager, a cannery foreman, and an ex-cannery manager, with a company-hired Pinkerton agent acting as go-between. The "Sockeye Fusiliers," headed by Capt. C. Gardiner-Johnson, a partner in a cannery, failed to budge strikers, their morale reinforced by the return of Rogers, the refusal of some Japanese to go out, and the fact that eight canneries could get no salmon because they employed no Japanese.

Despite intense pressure from canners and Indian agents, Native fishermen and some 700 cannery women stayed with the strike, playing a major role in the final settlement of 19 cents across the board. With the major part of the season still ahead, the union settlement gained substantially more than the Japanese deal.

The following year opened auspiciously with a central Grand Lodge of Fishermen uniting lodges at Vancouver, New Westminster, Eburne, Canoe Pass, Ladner's Landing and at Port Simpson, this last composed of Natives. It was the forerunner in form of the present day United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union.

The fishermen demanded 15 cents throughout the season. The canners countered with 12 cents in July and 10 in August. The Japanese Association accepted and its members went fishing, protected by armed patrol boats. The provincial police sent out a Japanese "decoy" with two constables hiding under blankets in the bottom of the boat, one of them the notorious Dan Campbell, who 17

years later shot and killed Arthur (Ginger) Goodwin. Six strikers who accosted the vessel were arrested.

The day the six men appeared in court in Vancouver, Rogers and a union member named Desplains were arrested. Later, Captain Anderson, a member of the union negotiating committee, and his boat puller, Arthur Emery, were also taken into custody. All faced similar charges, with 15 counts, kidnapping and marooning among them, against Rogers alone.

The first trials at Vancouver ended in acquittal for Rogers and the patrolmen, W. J. Bowser, the prosecutor, who was to go down in history as the venal attorney general of a corrupt Conservative government, complained that "the Crown could not get a fair trial," although the court had made every appeal to prejudice to secure a conviction, Mr. Justice M. W. Tyrwhitt Drake describing them as "nothing more than thieves of the very worst class."

The season was over and the strike had long been settled by a compromise agreement averaging 10⅝ cents a fish before Rogers and the others faced new trials before the Assize Court at New Westminster in October.

Again the Crown failed to obtain a conviction from a prejudiced court. On October 8, the six patrolmen were found not guilty. On October 20, Desplains, Anderson and Emery were acquitted. The jury reported it could not reach agreement on the charges against Rogers and the case was laid over to the spring assizes. Rogers remained in jail and it took four months of protest meetings and delegations to free him on an exorbitant $10,000 bail. When the spring assizes opened, the case did not come up. Rebuffed in two trials, the government preferred to let it drop.

Marko (Mike) Vidulich of Ladner, an honorary life member of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, who died in 1967 at the age of 88 years, participated actively in the strikes of 1900-1901 and remembered Frank Rogers as "an organizer, one of the best the fishermen ever had; the canners could never buy him."

But the union leader who could not be bought could be physically destroyed. On the late evening of April 13,

1903, Rogers was gunned down on the Vancouver waterfront during the historic Canadian Pacific Railway strike.

Six weeks earlier, railway workers in Vancouver had begun the strike. Mass importation of scabs from other parts of the country sparked a waterfront tieup involving longshoremen, seamen, teamsters and other trades. From the outset, Rogers worked actively in organizing support for the strike.

He died in hospital two days after being hit in the stomach when a volley of shots — "fired by a gang of thugs employed by the CPR," according to the *Western Clarion* — rang out as he and two companions walked near the CPR tracks at the foot of Abbott Street.

Police arrested two men on charges of murder, Alfred Allan, a CPR special constable, and James McGregor, an imported strikebreaker. Allan was released later for lack of sufficient evidence and McGregor was acquitted at a trial in New Westminster which organized labor branded as a travesty of justice.

The trade union movement turned out in force on April 18 for Rogers' funeral. In a final tribute, contingents of organized fishermen, longshoremen, carpenters and other building tradesmen, shingle sawyers and millworkers, teamsters, machinists, typographers, civic employees, blacksmiths, musicians, barbers, cigar makers and tailors, escorted the hearse through the streets to the Labor Hall at the corner of Homer and Dunsmuir streets. "The funeral of Frank Rogers, taking place in the pouring rain this afternoon, is the biggest affair of the kind ever seen here," the *Columbian* reported.

The funeral was one demonstration of labor's temper. The great protest rally held at Vancouver City Hall on April 21 was another. There labor's leading spokesmen, among them J. C. Mortimer, Socialist leader, and Ernest Burns, Fishermen's Union organizer, demanded that the murderers be brought to justice. But the murderers went free.

Frank Rogers was dead but he left a legacy of militancy and a strike slogan that has never died — "United we stand, divided we fall."

The Grand Lodge continued to function after 1901

with diminishing influence. The 1902 settlement, based on a sliding scale according to pack, gave canners the basis for cheating fishermen out of $45,000 by padding their pack to 252,418 cases, just over the figure that allowed for a price cut from 18 cents to 16½ cents.

This was the year that B.C. Packers Association, financed by eastern capital, amalgamated 43 canneries, 30 of them on the Fraser, thus laying the foundation of the present B.C. Packers monopoly — itself the creature of the George Weston food empire — that today controls the Pacific coast fishing industry with the U.S.-owned Canadian Fishing Company.

The Grand Lodge became the Amalgamated Lodge, centred in New Westminster. Although its influence was weakening, it nonetheless succeeded in establishing a poundage rate for spring, coho and steelhead for the first time in 1902. But the diminished strength of the union and the Japanese Association was reflected in the ability of canners to cut prices to as low as seven cents in 1905 despite an agreement to pay 10 cents.

Faced with ruthless exploitation by canners who fostered division and took every advantage of the lack of organization, fishermen and shoreworkers fought back. In 1913, when canners cut the sockeye price from 25 to 15 cents on August 3, on the eve of an anticipated big cycle run, Japanese fishermen called a strike and were backed by Natives and whites. Most cannery work was done by Native and Japanese women, ready allies. The strike fell apart when several canners agreed to pay 20 cents. But the price was quickly adjusted to 15 cents as the huge sockeye run brought quotas and appalling waste. The strike was unique, however, in that it united fishermen and shoreworkers, if only for a day, in the former's cause.

Struggles in northern B.C., led by Natives, had been taking place in these years and a new fishery, trolling for springs and coho, was developing. At the same time, establishment of cold storage facilities was stimulated by arrival of the railway in 1914.

A depression from 1912 through the early war years brought a new wave of anti-oriental hysteria. New Westminster Trades and Labor Council called for removal of Japanese from the Fraser and indeed from the whole

coast, and a new organization of fishermen, the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Association, was formed in 1914 with these objectives. The new group, aside from its political efforts in this direction, found little to quarrel with in sockeye prices which reached a 60-cent opening in 1918 and an 80-cent peak. But the 1913 Hell's Gate slide and overfishing, particularly by U.S. traps, had decimated the fishery.

The scene of union activity had shifted to the central area where the cooperative community of Sointula on Malcolm Island, founded in the opening years of the century by Finnish settlers, most of them socialists and all idealists, produced militant union leadership which helped to form the United Fishermen of B.C., its original constitution written in Finnish.

In 1917, its founding year, the union won an increase of 2½ cents a fish at Rivers Inlet at a time when the central and northern fisheries operated under licensing limits giving canners a stranglehold on the fisheries and the fishermen. One special licence had given a single canner control over much of the Smith Inlet fishery through a highly profitable drag seine operation at the mouth of Quascilla Creek. Angry, fish-poor war veterans burned the company's nets in 1919, incensed at the injustice. A strike for a 15-cent increase in 1922 failed when operators refused to compromise, clearly determined to destroy the union, and fishermen themselves were not sufficiently united; a majority of McTavish Cannery fishermen, mainly Natives, went out fishing.

This division was simply a reflection of the piecemeal organization existing in the industry in 1922. There were at least half a dozen groups, including the Japanese Association and the Native Fishermen's Association in addition to what had become the B.C. Fishermen's Protective Association in New Westminster with a membership limited to "whites and Native Indians," although relatively few Natives fished the Fraser. Its mission, and indeed that of all non-Japanese groups, joined by the political opportunists of the day, was to drive the Japanese from the industry. Federal orders progressively cut their numbers in gillnetting and trolling, and totally eliminated them from salmon and herring seining.

2. The Fight for Unity

Then came the "Hungry Thirties," the years of wage and price cuts, of hardship and hunger, which had a catalytic effect on union organization in the fishing industry.

Unorganized salmon seiners and gillnetters struck at Barkley Sound in the fall of 1931, resulting in minor gains and followed by the formation of two unions, the Fishermen's Industrial Union and the B.C. Seiners Association, which quickly changed its name to United Fishermen of B.C. and then United Fishermen's Federal Union. The former was an affiliate of the militant Workers Unity League which organized industrial unions and the latter joined the craft oriented Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

The Fishermen's Industrial Union, forerunner of the present day United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union in its concept of bringing together all workers, was in part an offshoot of the B.C. Fishermen's Protective Association, which had dropped its Vancouver local because of the latter's embarrassing militancy. Its stated aim was "to promote and lead in the daily economic

struggles of the workers employed in the fishing industry for higher living standards and social conditions, repudiating arbitration and class collaboration in all price, wage, or working disputes, relying entirely upon the militant activity of the organized fishermen and workers in the industry . . ."

In 1933, this new union which included some Japanese, Chinese, and Indians, became more appropriately the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union. Strikes at Rivers and Smith Inlets in 1932 ended with modest gains, many fishermen blaming the B.C. Fishermen's Protective Association for the poor settlement. Disputes escalated, extending into the pilchard and herring fisheries where the United Fishermen played a key part. Actually, it was only after several years of listening to and largely accepting the policy of extreme caution advocated by prominent skippers, some of whom later became minor company executives, that the United Fishermen finally decided it had little in common with company oriented vessel owners. In 1935 it excluded from membership owners of vessels over 35 feet, large craft in those days.

A series of strikes marked the 1935 season — in halibut in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, blueback (young coho) trolling in the Gulf of Georgia, pilchard seining on the west coast of Vancouver Island, as well as sockeye fishing in Bute Inlet. The blueback strike was easily the most significant since it won the first signed agreement in the salmon fishery with the Deep Bay Fishing and Packing Company. A cannery workers' agreement had been signed earlier the same year. The dispute ended favorably despite back door negotiations between salmon canners and the Japanese Association and the B.C. Fishermen's Protective Association. The Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union frankly criticized its own failure to set prices and establish area committees early enough, lack of effective picketing and poor communication in addition to the sellout tactics of the existing fishermen's "association," all of them lessons for the future.

That future came quickly, putting all the union's theories to the test in a strike for 50-cent sockeye in the central area of the coast. Canners in 1936 posted a 40-cent price, five cents less than the Nass-Skeena level, then set

about breaking the strike with the aid of George S. Pearson, labor minister in the Liberal provincial government. Pearson offered to arbitrate the dispute at the request of canners but fishermen refused on the grounds that it would "mean a post-season settlement." Despite efforts of a joint committee representing all groups of seiners and gillnetters, the strike was broken by "white scabs" on Rivers Inlet who had been promised adequate police protection by Pearson, and by Natives at Alert Bay who went out fishing.

Again, lack of communication away from the inlets themselves was shown to be a key problem in the strike. Pearson's intervention favored the canners. Three fishermen were charged with intimidating strikebreakers and one of them, Axel Anderson of Gibsons, was held five days in jail after the strike before facing trial in Vancouver. The strike experience of a disunited joint Fishermen's Council and its unfortunate outcome emphasized the need for unity in the industry. Symbolic of the times was a post-strike demand for reinstatement or relief for all those involved in the strike.

A negative outcome of the 1936 dispute was formation of the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association by Alert Bay Natives who felt they had not received fair treatment during the strike and wanted to make their own arrangements with operators "before proceeding to the fishing grounds . . ." By 1942, it had become part of the Native Brotherhood of B.C. which, in 1945, was recognized by the provincial labor department as bargaining agent for Native fishermen.

In 1936, the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Union had reorganized into the militant Salmon Purse Seiners Union and the equally virile Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union of gillnetters and trollers. Fishermen were not yet ready for industrial unionism but leaders of the two groups simply regarded the division as a temporary expedient necessary in order to effect eventual amalgamation. When unification was finally achieved in 1945, one of the men involved in early struggles, Elgin (Scotty) Neish, wrote: "Thus the objectives of the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Union have been accomplished after many years of struggle."

It was a step by step process, both groups affiliating briefly with their U.S. counterparts to get into the mainstream of labor. They jointly established *The Fisherman* as a bi-weekly newspaper in 1937, constantly putting forward the case for a single union as the avenue for achieving economic advances. The SPSU got a Trades and Labor Congress charter in 1938 as unquestioned representative of the seine fleet. Leaders of the SPSU and PCFU continued working toward their goal of a single union in conferences and on the grounds, coming to a 1938 conference committed to support "any logical unity proposal." Overtures, at first cold-shouldered, were made by the SPSU to the United Fishermen's Federal Union and by the PCFU to the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Association, which had reaffiliated to the Trades and Labour Congress in 1937 as Local 14. As long as the latter held jurisdiction over gillnetters and trollers, it could exclude the PCFU and play its role of disunity to the limit.

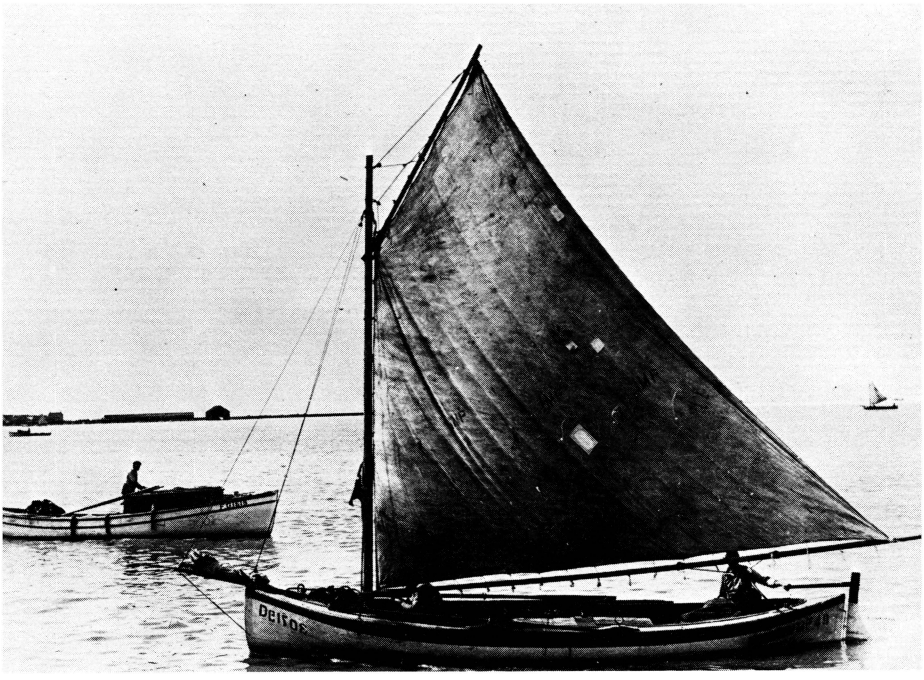
The Fraser River group concentrated on narrow self-interest, and in so doing ignored the problems prevalent in the industry and common to all fishermen which required unified economic and legislative pressure. This approach cost fishermen heavily in the prices they received for their salmon because it enabled canners to exploit disunity to the full. The ideal of one union in the industry was growing, however, and the issue became increasingly prominent in the association's meetings as its own members pressed for amalgamation, forcing its leaders to hear speakers from the PCFU. Men such as Gus Cogswell, George Miller, Dan Martin, Neish and others toured the Fraser River with their unity message, although amalgamation did not become a fact until 1944.

The membership gradually lost faith in a corrupt, opportunist leadership notorious for its "yellow-dog" agreements and back door dealings with operators. Vessel owners, the UFFU and the two Native groups joined it in making a price deal with operators in 1937, but in 1939 its only ally in a price cutting agreement which came to light some years later was the Vessel Owners Association.

The dramatic strike of 1938, when salmon seiners in perfect naval formation sailed into Vancouver to strip their gear and tie up for the season, forced canners to

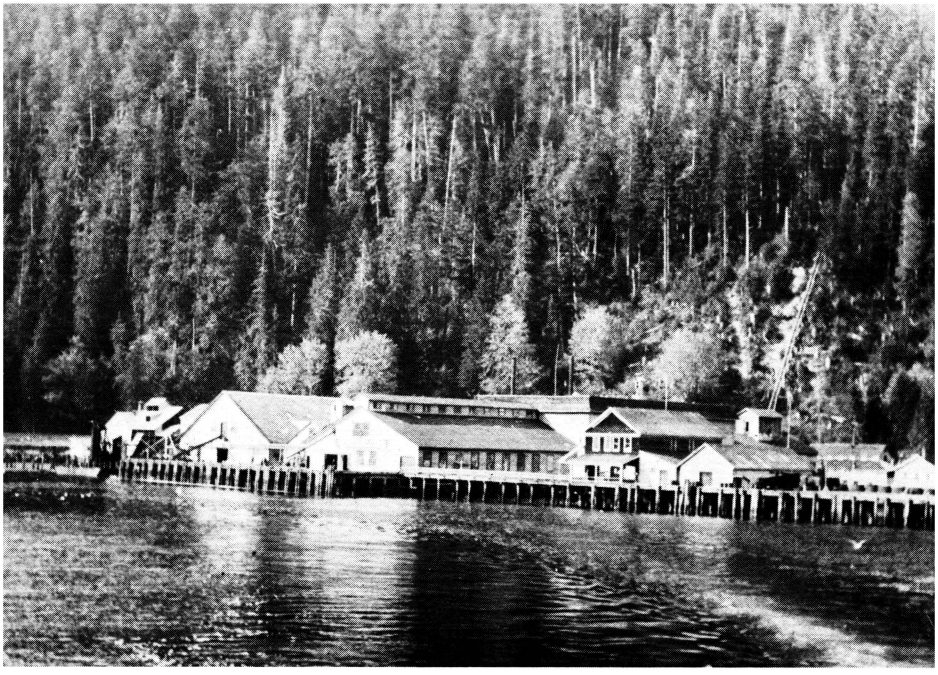
Vancouver Public Library photo

Called out in July, 1900 on an order signed by three justices of the peace — Robert Whiteside, foreman for the Pacific Coast Packing Company: Edward Hunt, a Steveston storekeeper, and Reeve M. B. Wilkinson of Richmond, a cannery owner — these militiamen paraded outside their cannery headquarters were dubbed the "Sockeye Fusiliers" by the striking Fraser River fishermen they were intended to intimidate.



TOP: Sail gillnetters on the Fraser River in the opening years of the century.

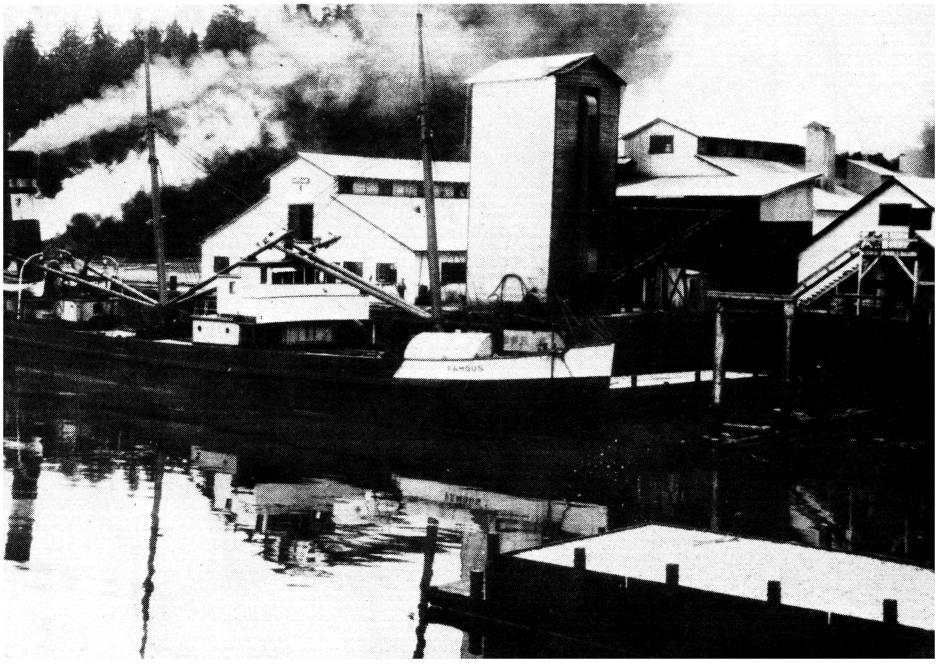
BOTTOM: Columbia River boats under tow at Rivers Inlet in the early twenties.



Jim Patterson photos

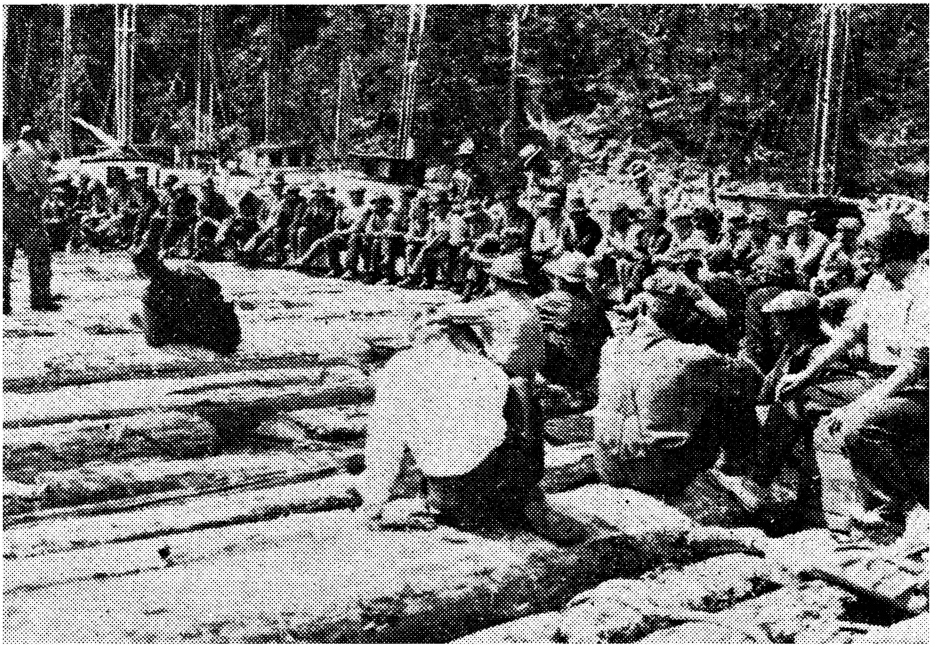
TOP: B.C. Packers' plant at Kildonan on Uchucklesit Inlet around 1928.

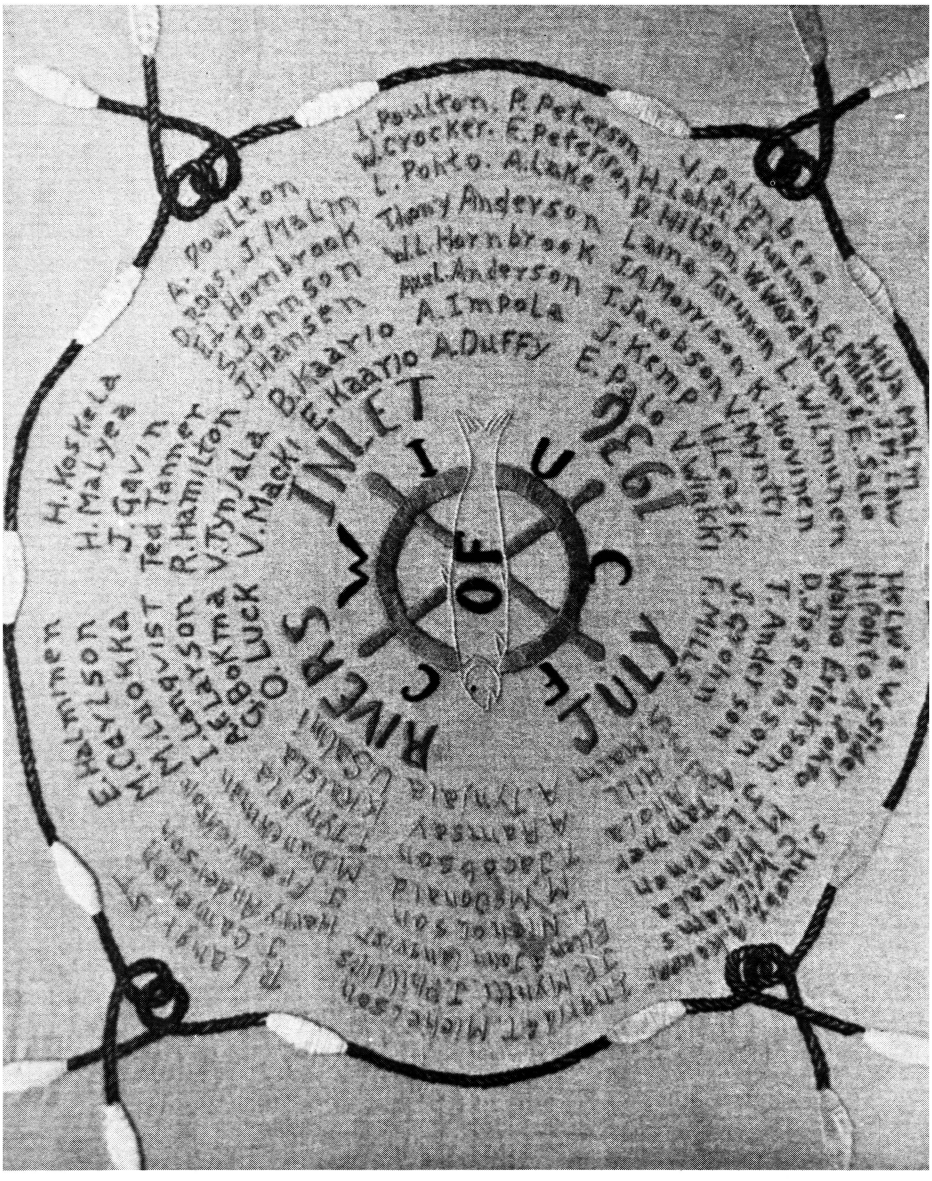
BOTTOM: The Famous loading pilchard oil at B.C. Packers' Hecate plant on Hecate Channel in 1928.



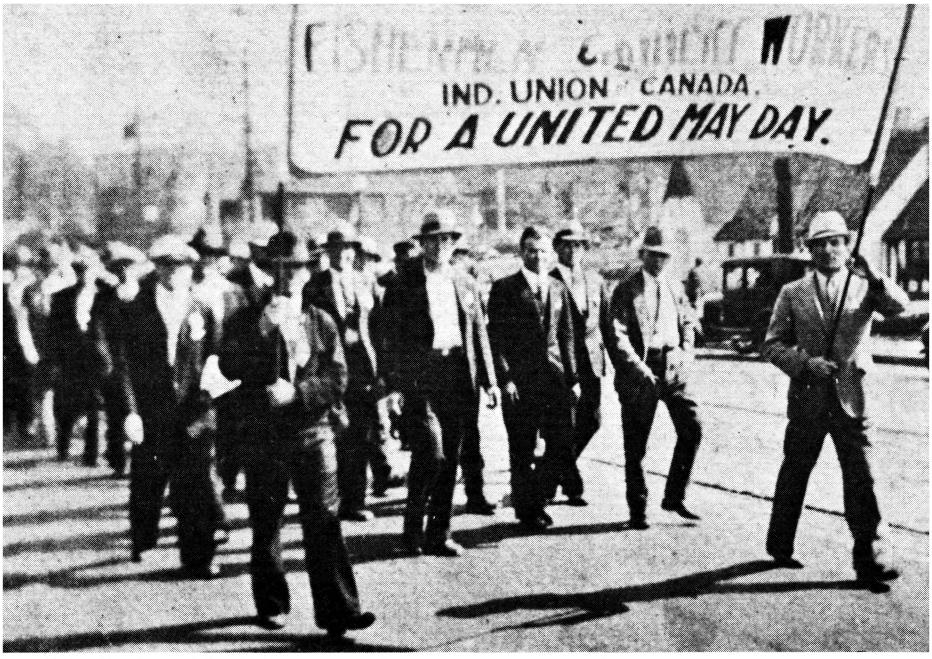
TOP: Nitinat Cannery near the entrance to Nitinat Lake, built in 1917 and acquired by Gosse Packing Company Ltd. in 1927, two years before this photo was taken.

BOTTOM: Dave Rogers of Nanaimo, strike committee chairman, addressing some 200 trollers meeting on a log boom at False Bay during their tieup for higher prices from Deep Bay Cannery in 1929.



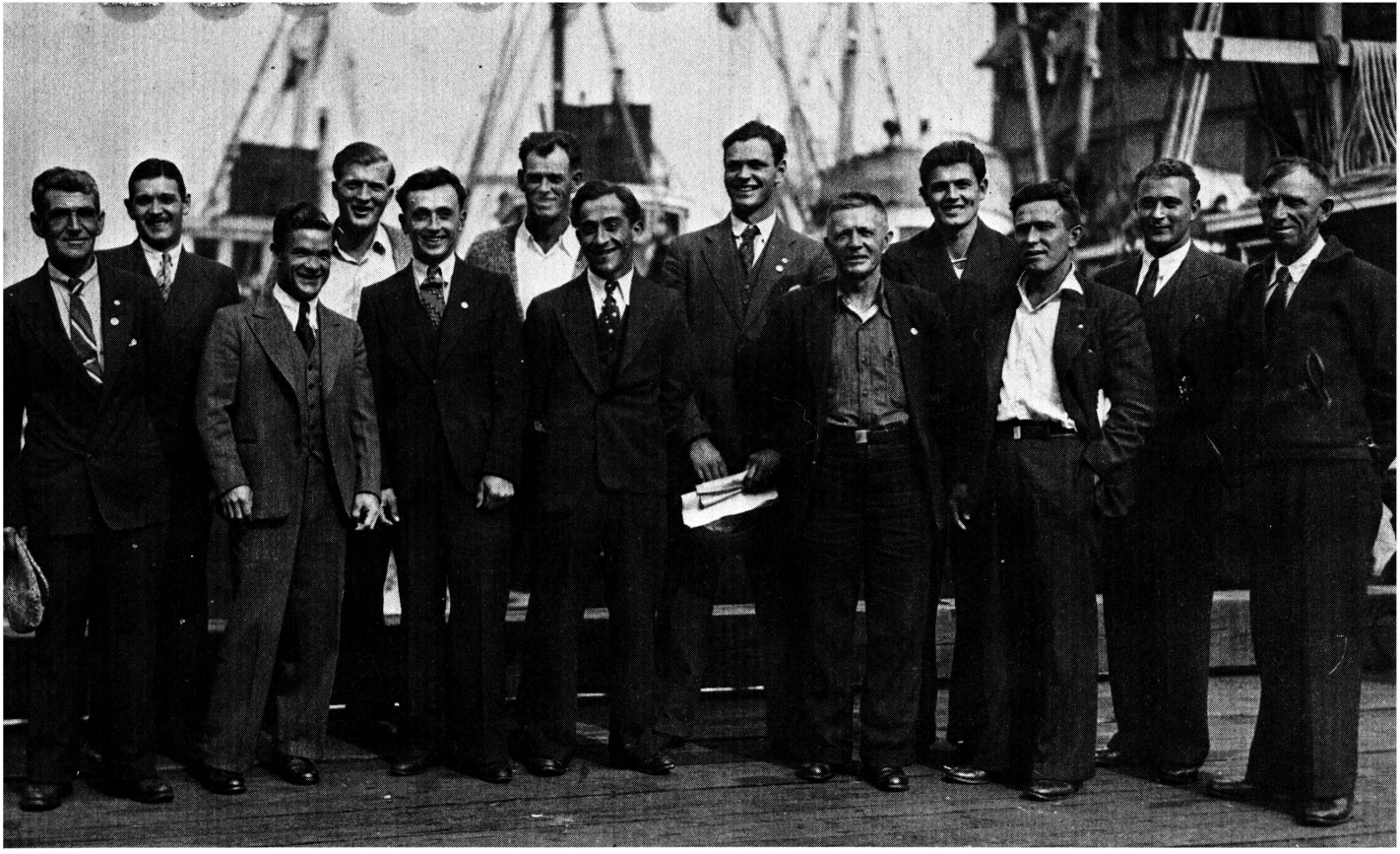


This historic embroidery done by Sointula fishermen's wives records the names of members of the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union of Canada who took part in the Rivers Inlet strike of 1936 which ushered in a new period of union organization.



TOP: Members of the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union of Canada march in the Vancouver May Day parade in 1936.

BOTTOM: Headed by the Chief Tatush, skippered by Elgin (Scotty) Neish, secretary of the Salmon Purse Seiners Union, and the Graduc, 60 vessels of the seine fleet sail into Vancouver Harbor to tie up and strip their gear on September 25, 1938.



Members of the Salmon Purse Seiners Union's 1938 strike committee in this photo taken at Campbell Avenue dock, Vancouver (from second left) are: Cliff Cook, Matt Gregory, Bill Gee, John Lenich, Matt Stefanich, Murphy Fiori, Elgin (Scotty) Neish, Marian Ruljanovich, Leo Trosell, Matt Siaus, Frank Michele and Tom Hansen. The man at extreme left is unidentified.

TOP: This photo of Angus Neish and his wife Audrey illustrates the support both the SPSU and PCFU gave to the Republican cause during the Spanish civil war. At least two SPSU members served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, John Deresinovic and Jim Cameron, who was taken prisoner in 1938 and released from a fascist prison to go to Britain in the early forties.

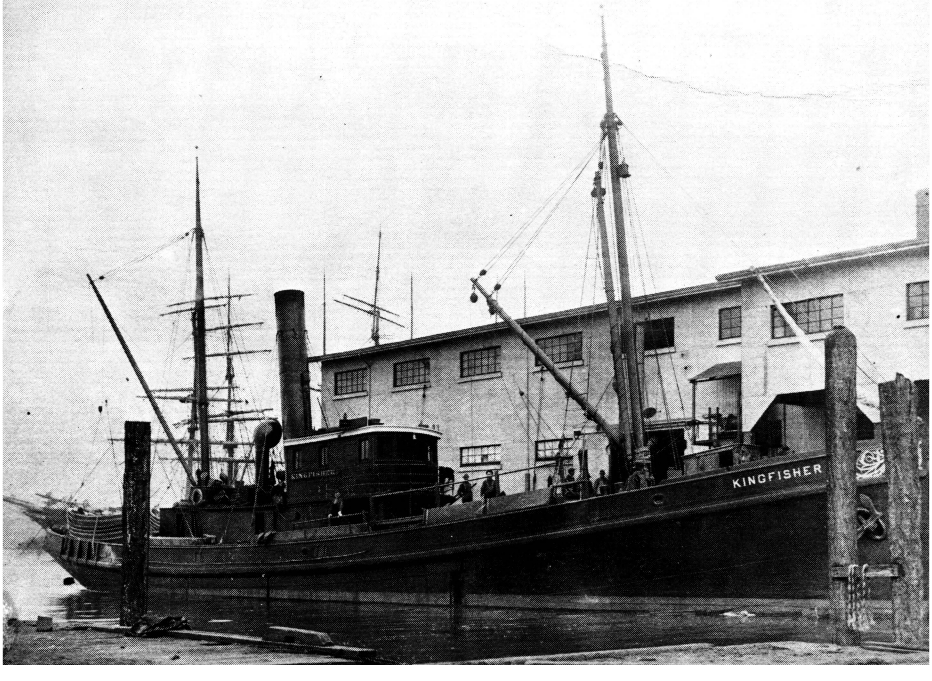
BOTTOM: A Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union boat plate.

Skiff fishing for halibut in Burrard Inlet in the early years of the century.

The halibut steamer New England, highest producer in the Canadian Fishing Company's fleet, arrives at Vancouver sheathed in ice after weathering a storm in the Gulf of Alaska which sank the Onward Ho with all hands in 1916.

TOP: The halibut schooner Emma H., built at Lunenburg, N.S., and sailed around Cape Horn in 1912, at the New England Fishing Company's dock in Vancouver.

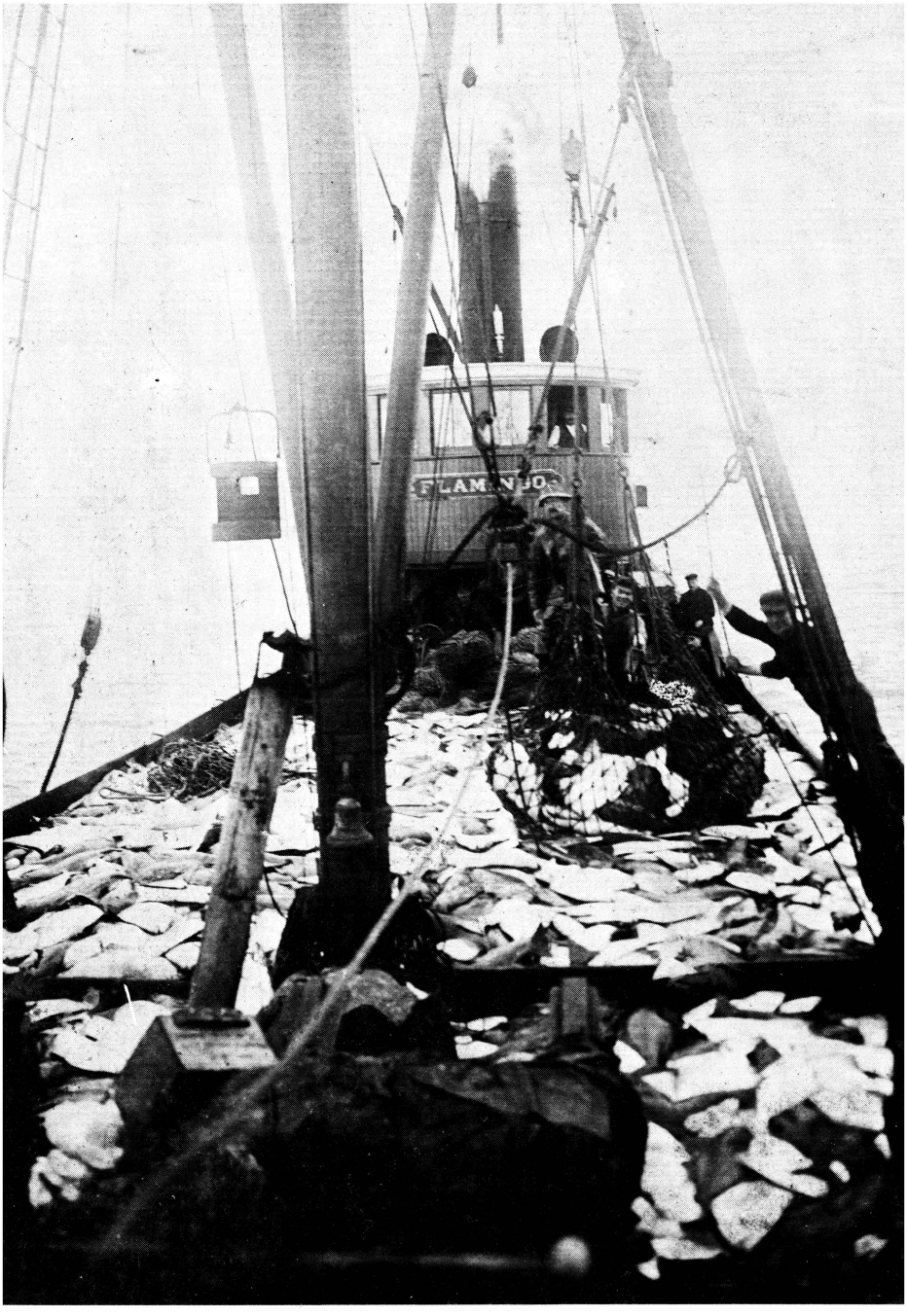
BOTTOM: The Canadian Fishing Company's halibut steamer Kingfisher was second only to the New England in production.



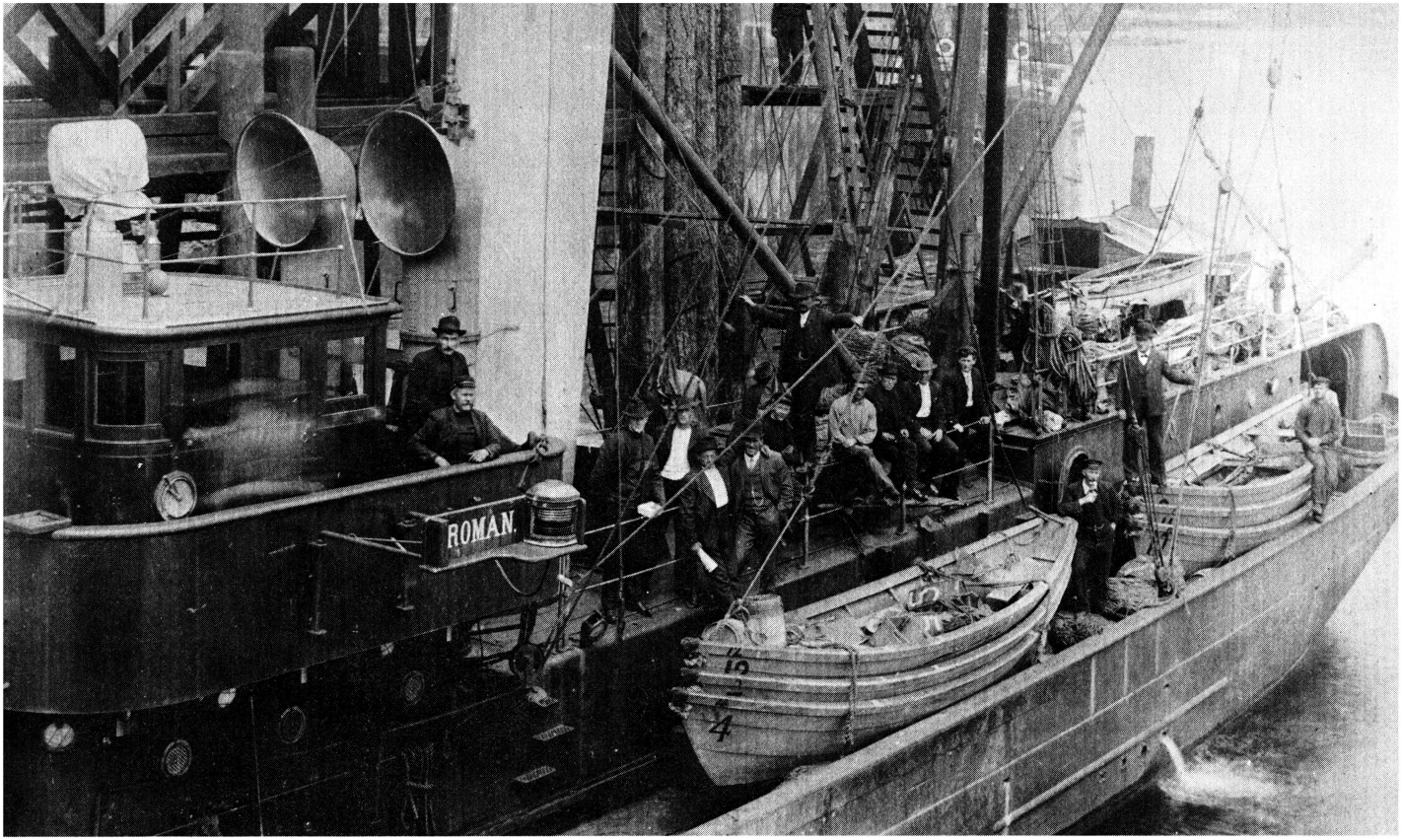
Another of the renowned halibut steamers of the B.C. coast was the Celestial Empire, shown at Kyuquot around 1913. Built at Hull, England, she carried 12 officers and crew members and 24 fishermen to man her dories.

TOP: A crew member displays two fine halibut aboard the Killmeny, first halibut vessel to make Vancouver her home port.

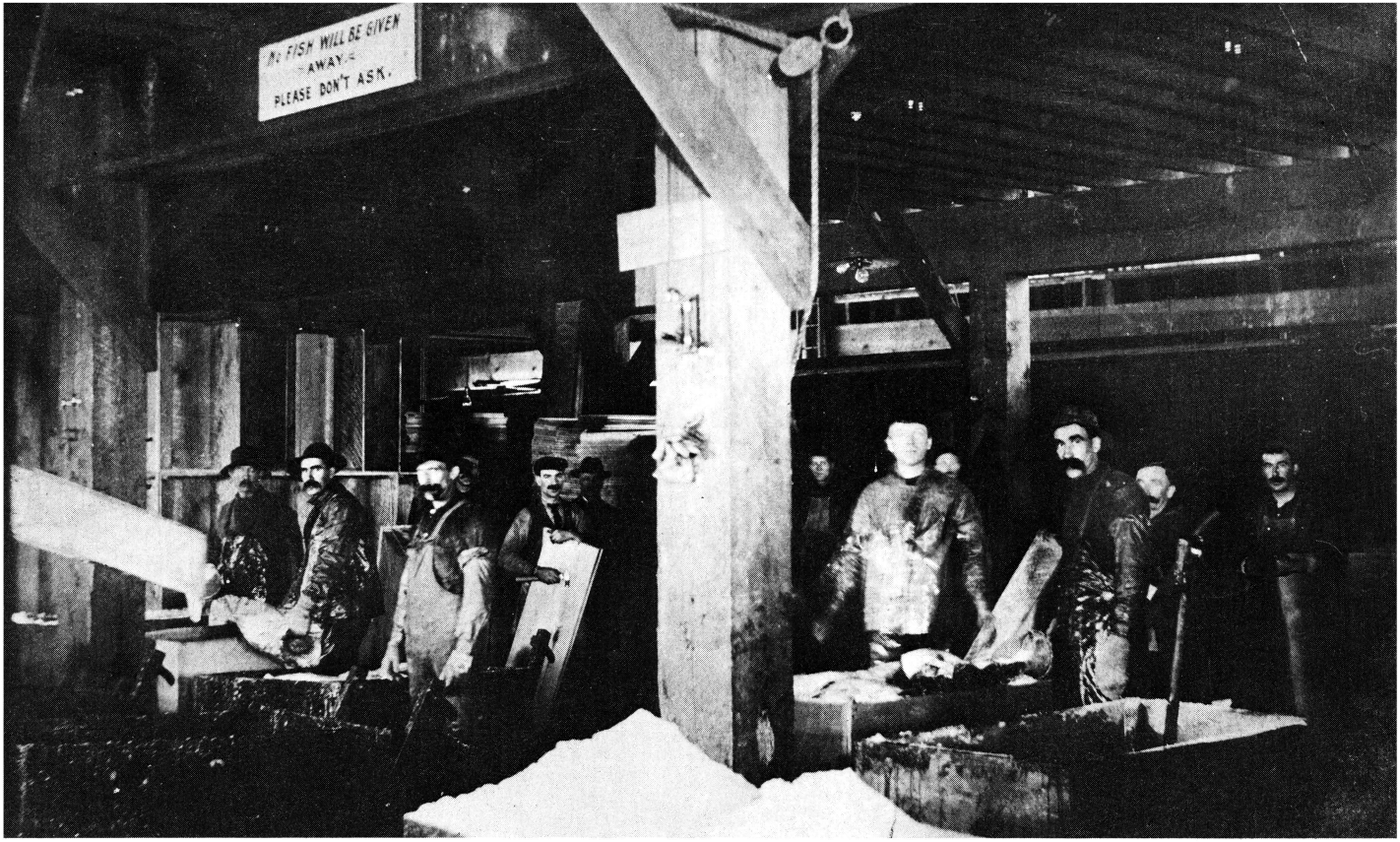
BOTTOM: Crew members work on their catch aboard the James Carrothers, which in 1913 was the first halibut vessel to switch from dory fishing to direct longlining.



Donald Watson who, at 94, was the oldest living member of the UFAWU in 1974, was a crew member aboard the halibut vessel Flamingo in 1909.



This photo of the halibut steamer Roman, taken in 1909 or 1910, is one of the finest surviving from an era which bestowed colorful nicknames on its fishermen. At centre, standing on the rail and holding the rigging, is Bob (Silvertop) Thompson.



There was no union of shoreworkers when this photo was taken. Wages were poor, hours were long and prices paid to fishermen were low — the exploitation from which the fishing companies extracted the wealth to create a monopoly.

establish a written understanding with the militant SPSU. Unification of these organizations under the banner of the United Fishermen's Federal Union was achieved in stages — the Salmon Purse Seiners in 1940, the Pacific Coast Fishermen the following year, the Fraser group in 1944. Finally in 1945, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union was born, merging the UFFU and the Fish Cannery, Reduction Plant and Allied Workers Union, formed in 1941 in the shore section of the industry. The concept of an industrial union had become the reality.

Much organizational work remained to be done in all sections of the industry and a few organizations — notably the Native Brotherhood of B.C. and the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union in Prince Rupert — remained outside the new united union, usually on the basis of tenuous cooperation and a highly cautious approach to negotiations which at times was indistinguishable from a pro-company stand. In at least one instance, during the 1952 fall strike, the Native Brotherhood broke ranks with the union and signed a "back door" agreement. And the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union helped to defeat Prince Rupert trawlers in the major strike of 1967 by signing a trawl agreement with Prince Rupert Fishing Vessel Owners Association while UFAWU members were in the majority on the vessels involved.

The Japanese had been driven out of the industry after Pearl Harbor — the 1941 season was their last — and the injustices heaped on them brought little sympathy from their non-Japanese competitors. The BCFPA executive, in keeping with its stated policy, voted on January 3, 1942, to recommend that its members refuse to fish if Japanese were granted licences. Its chief concern a couple of months later was how to get Japanese fishing vessels, all of which had been confiscated by federal order, as cheaply as possible. Similar sentiments existed in the United Fishermen's Federal Union.

When wartime restrictions were lifted, the same elements opposed the return of Japanese to the industry, unsuccessfully because the union leadership argued strongly for the principle of the UFAWU constitution, which provides for membership "regardless of race, religious, or political opinion . . ." Discussions with

leaders of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association brought the understanding that those reentering the fishing industry should be encouraged to join the UFAWU, rather than reestablish their own association.

Prejudice dies hard, however, and union conventions for a few years faced — and soundly rejected — anti-Japanese resolutions, adopting a policy of complete and equal rights with other fishermen. Union officers warned members refusing to share net float space with Japanese as late as 1951 that such action violated the union constitution and laid them open to charges. The union bluntly told canners it would not tolerate racial discrimination.

Fishing companies have consistently, sometimes adroitly, exploited the false issue of racial differences, often diverting fishermen from the real problems of achieving a measure of economic stability and security. Canners played the game according to their basic rule of getting salmon as cheaply as possible to make maximum profits, but they turned their backs on the Japanese and their pleas for help when wartime hysteria forced them out of the fishing industry in 1942.

The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia had its roots in two areas — the economic and social. Fish companies deviously set about granting small favors to key men and making cut rate price and wage deals until well into the thirties, chiefly in the north coast area. The great strides resulting from union growth on the south coast threatened this fairly cosy arrangement. "Frankly," said one cannery manager in 1941, "the writer hopes we can keep the Natives within their own organization. In their present status they can be handled much easier than if they were led by one or more of those Vancouver agitators. The "agitators" wanted nothing more than equal pay for equal work, a decent living standard, and a single, powerful union to achieve these conditions.

The essential role of the Native Brotherhood has been to moderate settlements along lines sought by canners. In 1952, its leaders broke ranks and signed a salmon agreement at company prices; at the same time, some of the Fraser River gillnetters were indicating weakness, forcing the union membership to withdraw after a four-day strike. The same tactic during a protracted tieup over

fall chum price cuts failed when rank and file Native fishermen united with unionists to force an arbitrated settlement.

The UFAWU and its predecessor unions have always welcomed Native membership at the same time striving to maintain the Native Brotherhood as an effective political arm of the Native people.

This was the perspective of the Native Brotherhood's founders, men like Alfred Adams and Chief William Matthews, who led the fight for a united Indian organization during the thirties on the grounds that only by speaking with one voice could Native people hope to overcome the social problems facing them.

As the late Ivan Adams, son of the Native Brotherhood's first president, was to write in later years, the founders of the organization never visualized its becoming a competitor in the trade union field. The brotherhood started to bargain for Native fishermen simply because no fishermen's union existed in the northern area when it was formed. Essentially, Adams said, the founders believed the brotherhood "must be used for what it was organized," fighting on the political front for the social advancement of the Indian people.

The UFAWU now includes steadily increasing numbers of Native fishermen and shoreworkers, bringing closer the goal of one industrial union representing all workers in the fishing industry.

The dozen unions of 1938 existed not only because of the racial makeup of the work force but chiefly because of gear differences. Aside from co-ops, gillnetters were split between six organizations, trollers four, seiners three, and halibut fishermen two. The series of mergers culminating in formation of the UFAWU were the product of bitter experience. In 1935, for example, a joint bargaining committee for Gulf of Georgia blueback prices was undercut when Japanese and Fraser River organizations signed "sweetheart" contracts.

More recently, some west coast trollers formed the Pacific Trollers Association, not to seek fair salmon prices but to circumvent minimum price struggles by fellow fishermen. In 1963, the PTA organized a scab packer service during a coastwide salmon strike in which strikers

halted all major operations. It is the employers' answer to unionism and minimum prices and it has deliberately weakened the struggle for a basic troll salmon price.

The Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of Prince Rupert, whose leaders have repeatedly rejected amalgamation, undercut trawl fishermen's efforts to win a price agreement by providing a haven for strikebreakers and signing an inferior share agreement with Prince Rupert Fishing Vessel Owners Association.

The well-heeled B.C. Gillnetters Association was reincarnated from the old B.C. Fishermen's Protective Association and the Upper Fraser Fishermen's Association at a time of crisis and price cutting in late 1952 when fishermen urgently required unity to salvage their livelihood.

Its aims were clearly to fight salmon seiners, to circumvent fishermen's strikes and in fact to outlaw price negotiations. In a vicious, costly, but dismally unsuccessful raid on the UFAWU in 1953, it joined forces with the racketeering Seafarers International Union and in 1954 it provided a haven for fishermen who scabbed during the 1954 tendermen's strike.

Its total complicity with employers was exposed in 1955 when it secretly initiated proceedings against the union and its price and share contracts under the Combines Investigation Act. When the investigation was underway, the anti-union group contacted the lawyer acting for the Combines Branch to see "if there is any material they would like in connection with the investigation."

This now defunct organization, which actually debated a motion to approach canners for help in organizing, provides a classic example of how sectional opportunism in the form of a "gear" association has evolved into a tool for company interests. In an extreme form, it lays bare the historical role of such groups in the fishing industry.

3. Catch Division and Prices

While splinter organizations predicted their policies on an anti-seiner, anti-unity, pro-company basis, the UFAWU concentrated its efforts on developing cooperative unity between gears in order to advance their mutual interests. With all gears competing for virtually the same fish, changes in fishery regulations can upset balances which have developed over many decades.

Salmon fishing boundaries have been a matter of friction between gears on many occasions. One particular instance, Area 17 off the Fraser, was so contentious that the federal government appointed J. M. Sloan as a commissioner in 1941 to hear argument from seiners, gillnetters, and other groups as to location of the boundary inside of which seiners were forbidden to fish. It was set at a minimum distance of two miles off the mouth of the Fraser. But in 1942, the fisheries department extended seine boundaries even farther to assure a full pack for the British Food Mission, giving seiners 41 percent of the sockeye catch.

Determined to solve the problem during the 1946 Adams River sockeye run, the now united body of gill-

netters and seiners had worked out a joint plan with operators for handling the tricky situation. Its basic objective was to achieve a catch division of one third to seiners and two thirds to gillnetters after the Sooke salmon traps had taken their bite. Ottawa refused to cooperate by adding to or subtracting from the three-day opening it granted seiners in the extended area.

Seiners, in an unprecedented show of disciplined unionism, gave up a full day's fishing time at the direction of the joint committee to allow gillnetters to catch their agreed two thirds even though uncooperative fisheries officials said they would not grant seiners extra time regardless of catch. UFAWU leaders described the seiners' action as "one of the finest examples of union solidarity on record anywhere." They were legally entitled to fish "but instead unitedly accepted the committee's ruling." Had they not, gillnetters would never have taken the 60.8 percent they finally netted.

Seiners took similar action the following year, authorizing a joint gillnet-seine committee to act if gillnetters appeared to be getting too few fish. In 1949, canners asked for and got an opening of the extended area which hit fishermen "like a bolt from the blue." Seiners again took action at an emergency meeting to reactivate the joint UFAWU committee and gave it power to aim for equal division of the pink catch between the gears. As soon as seiners got 600,000 pinks, a traditional seine species, they were to cease fishing.

Federal fisheries minister R. W. Mayhew denounced the suggestion on the grounds that canners wanted quality pinks and gillnet fish were of inferior quality in the river. Moreover, canners opposed release of statistics to guide the union committee and the federal government complied with its position. The area closed before the target had been reached.

At its 1950 convention the union amended its position to seek a pink and sockeye catch division based on the number of fishermen involved in each gear. Faced with lack of cooperation from the canners and the department, the union opposed any change in the Sloan boundary unless it was accompanied by "prior agreement as to catch division between the union and operators." By opposing

catch division, the union declared, "the operators have endangered the interests of both gillnetters and seiners."

In 1954, the issue arose once more but fisheries minister James Sinclair refused to become involved in any catch division program, stating that the extended area would only be opened to avoid one gear getting the "lion's share." The matter has rested there ever since, with the union generally taking a stand for maintenance of existing fishing boundaries. But seiners have written a page in the union's story that stands as an example of how unity is forged.

When salmon purse seiners staged their dramatic flotilla-like sail-in from the fishing grounds in September, 1938, they established the principle of union recognition and a minimum price for fall chums in a letter of understanding from the Salmon Canners Operating Committee.

The precedent had already been set when the Deep Bay Fishing and Packing Company signed fish price and cannery agreements with the Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union of Canada, but the big operators had refused to bargain. Major canners made deals, posted prices but refused to sign contracts.

The Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union and the Salmon Purse Seiners won gillnet and seine agreements in 1939 establishing minimum prices ranging, according to area, from 4 to 5½ cents for pinks, 5½ to 8 cents for chums, 27 to 52½ for red springs, and 25 cents coho. Sockeye sold for a high of 65 cents on the Fraser and a low of 38 cents at Butedale, Namu, Klemtu, Kimsquit and Bella Coola. Compare this with depression prices as low as two cents apiece for pinks and chums and on occasion not even a buyer.

The UFAWU established the principle of poundage buying for pinks and chums in its 1945 contracts but it took 14 years and considerable struggle before it was completely applied to salmon seiners.

Gains have come hard in the B.C. fishing industry. Despite strong union resistance in the form of strike action, canners used a canned salmon carryover created by restrictive company and government trade policies to force price cuts on fishermen in 1952 and 1953.

Despite such cuts, the gains made by salmon fishermen through the UFAWU was apparent in the net caught prices for 1974 — 52 cents for sockeye, 42 cents for coho, 22 cents for pinks, 24½ to 27 cents for chums according to area, 65 cents for red springs, 27 cents for white springs.

The union in 1947 established a single coastwise price for sockeye, ending a long company tradition of paying lower prices outside the Fraser area. All species except chums are sold at a standard price, a condition that brought substandard central and northern rates up to those established by strong southern union organization.

Old time salmon seiners will recall the dismal conditions they worked under in the twenties and thirties and the improvements established under the union's share agreement. Some of them will remember their 1941 strike which wiped out the 7/12 crew share, replacing it with 7/11, establishing gradually improved conditions and protecting crews from unjustified charges such as vessel licence.

The union established a welfare fund in 1949 based on a company payment of one cent a case, gradually increasing it 15 cents until in 1973 the method of computation was changed to 3/10 of a cent per pound of salmon, based on the net caught landings. Benefits in 1974 included up to $3,500 for death, an extra $250 for each child, up to 15 weeks' sickness indemnity and up to $300 for shipwreck.

Salmon tendermen, long an underpaid and highly exploited group, won their first agreement in 1941. Wage scales ranged from $80 to $145 per month with no control of hours and no days off, board being paid by crews. Union organization gradually improved conditions, including board and time off. It took until 1944 to establish a weekly day of rest or an extra day's pay to the 1974 figure of 1.14 days off for each day worked and pay scales based on a 14-day month.

Tendermen, whom canners considered a cut below fishermen and treated accordingly, stood up to canners in 1954 when the latter literally refused to bargain for six months. The company offered a munificent $3 a month for laundering ship's bedding and a slight holiday pay im-

provement, getting a majority conciliation board award with the aid of a chairman who had been a shareholder in B.C. Packers. Tendermen rejected the award, voted solidly to strike, and won a $15 monthly increase, a welfare plan to start the following year, axd the rudiments of a seniority plan.

The victory came as a result of union fishermen refusing to fish and shoreworkers to handle "hot" salmon. Tendermen recognized their debt in a vote of thanks, declaring that "out of this struggle has come a welding of all groups in the fishing industry." The pattern was clearly established — victory depended on unity.

4. Shoreworkers' Solidarity

The Fishermen and Cannery Workers Industrial Union had exposed deplorable cannery wages and conditions and fought a series of skirmishes before actually establishing a signed agreement in 1935 at the Deep Bay Cannery at 22½ cents an hour for women and 27 cents for men, up 2½ cents the following year. The unique contract established time and one half for Sundays and holidays and provided for a cannery committee. The pact died with the FCWIUC. Cannery women at Namu in 1937 struck in support of Native and Japanese fishermen (the whites scabbed) and gained an additional dollar per ticket.

The big push came in mid-1941 when 17 Kildonan workers applied to the Trades and Labor Congress for a charter after the TLC had refused to extend jurisdiction of the UFFU. The Fish Cannery, Reduction Plant and Allied Workers Union, Local 89, made quick progress, claiming 445 members at its first convention in March, 1942.

The union established a reduction plant agreement shortly afterward, winning union recognition, hourly wages of 56 to 75 cents and monthly rates of $115 for watchmen to $175 for shift boss and pressman. Straight

overtime was provided for after 10 hours daily during the processing period and eight hours before and after.

With the union bound by its "no strike" pledge to further the aim of victory over fascism, canners stalled cannery negotiations for steady workers, clearly represented by the union, until after the 1942 season. First male cannery contracts established an eight-hour day, 208-hour month for pre-season work and a 10-hour day, 230-hour month during the canning season plus one day off a week and legal holidays with straight time for all hours worked on these days. (Overtime rate was the monthly rate divided by 260.)

Before that contract, men sometimes worked three or four-week runs at 16 hours a day, seven days a week, without overtime pay. Rates ranged from $150 a month or 65 cents an hour for assistant machineman and fireman to $210 for lineman, retort engineer and port engineer-machinist. In 1974 rates for these groups, achieved after a series of struggles, were from $986.58 to $1,094.47 a month.

Canners concluded an agreement in 1943 with the Native Brotherhood setting a top rate of 50 cents an hour for slimers, washers, lineworkers, a beginner's rate of 40 cents and a piece work scale of 16.6 cents per case of 100 cans. Union rates in 1974 ranged from a beginner 1 rate of $4.37 an hour to a top of $4.90 for butchers, with washers getting $4.62 an hour.

The shoreworkers' greatest victory was won in 1973 when, in joint strike action with fishermen and tendermen, they shut down the entire British Columbia salmon industry for one week.

Their 91.6 percent vote to strike and only fractionally less 90 percent vote to reject the Fisheries Association's pre-strike offer again confirmed the assertion that only strength commands respect.

Not only did they win an unprecedented general wage increase of 80 cents an hour in the first and 70 cents an hour in the second year of a two-year contract, but the strength they demonstrated throughout negotiations and on the picket line enabled them to attain two historic goals. They established equal pay for women over the life of the contract. And, starting in 1974, they abolished the

"flexible weekend" under which the companies had been able to set Sunday and Monday as the cannery weekend, paying straight time for Saturday work, Saturday rates for Sunday work and Sunday overtime rates only on the rare occasions that the Monday was worked.

As secretary-treasurer Jack Nichol, assessing the advances made by shoreworkers, wrote in *The Fisherman* of July 17, 1973:

"Female networker rates lagged 85 cents an hour behind the male networker rate. Generally, the same discrepancies existed in fresh fish agreements.

"UFAWU cannery agreements were one of the most notorious examples of discrimination against women in employment. Two supplementary wage agreements, one colored blue and the other pink, set out wage conditions for men and women. The cannery women's supplement provided wage rates grossly inferior to those paid to men.

"These contract formats and the wage disparities were never consistent with the policies expressed in resolutions adopted by successive union conventions. As a union whose constitution embodies its progressive approach, the UFAWU has persistently raised the issue of equal pay in its contract demands and its representations to governments — but without success at the bargaining table.

"The women in the industry voted solidly in favor of strike action and maintained that solidarity in opposition to a wage increase formula that favored the higher paid categories. They stood with the men in rejecting a company wage offer which, although it was finally made across the board, all shoreworkers deemed inadequate.

"The companies had never faced such determination in the past. While the equal pay issue was resolved prior to the strike, there was strong resistance to the employers' attempt to obtain acceptance of an inferior wage package by highlighting attractive aspects of their wage offers in a calculated appeal to women.

"Consequently women gained the same general wage increase as men in addition to the special equal pay adjustments . . .

"Regrettably, wage discrimination is not immediately wiped out, but rather phased out over the two-year period.

Nevertheless, an important gain has been made considering how many years of struggle it represents."

Canners conducted a long, continuing resistance against progress in the shore section of the industry, not only against increases in wages but equally against reduction in hours of work, continually claiming they could only operate on the basis of complete hourly flexibility.

The union won the nine-hour day, 230-hour canning month in 1944. UFAWU members set the eight-hour day and time and a half overtime as top target in 1946 and networkers showed their determination by refusing to do any more network after their late March deadline. The historic four-week strike did win the eight-hour day with time and a quarter overtime and wage hikes of $15-16 monthly, a major increase in those days. Shoreworkers won the 44-hour week, 192-hour month with time and a half overtime after noon Saturdays and for Sunday the following year.

Pointing to the major gains made in the previous decade, business agent Alex Gordon noted: "Only a strong organization merits respect." It got respect and won the 40-hour week in 1954 with double time after eight hours Saturday, all conditions to take effect in 1956.

In 1956, an hour before the union's strike deadline, canners conceded to shoreworker insistence to force "freeloaders" to pay their share in union operations, an unprecedented 20 percent hourly wage hike, better holiday pay conditions and a welfare plan for 1957.

These basic conditions, extended to include a limited pension plan have gradually been improved along with wage rates. Welfare coverage in 1974 provided a 13-week, 70 percent wage indemnity payment and death benefits of up to $1,500 and $3,500, the higher figure applying to survivors with dependents.

Successes have not always been so spectacular but the days of inferior wages and atrocious working conditions, uncontrolled hours and lack of callout guarantees, discrimination on the basis of sex and race now are bitter relics of a past symbolically rejected by Native women at Namu when they took down segregated toilet signs labelled "Indians" and "whites".

5. Halibut, Herring and Trawl

The halibut fleet has a tradition of union organization that first took form around the turn of the century. In the winter of 1904 fishermen struck New England Fishing Company's three steamers operating out of B.C. ports to protest a change in the system of payment which was tantamount to a price cut. The company defeated the strike by hiring scab crews. Again, in 1909, another strike similarly was defeated by use of strikebreakers, some of whom were brought in from Nova Scotia.

By 1912, however, the largest part of the fleet had been organized into the Halibut Fishermen's Union and the strike began in that year, tying up the New England, Canadian Fishing and B.C. Packers' fleets throughout the winter, finally won union recognition and a price of 1¼ cents a pound — the men had asked 1½ cents — in 1913 after New England and Canadian Fishing, the last holdouts, capitulated and signed the agreement.

Over the next two decades, the old steamers, each carrying up to 14 two-man dories, were completely replaced by smaller schooners, usually with crews of five to eight men. Share agreements had generally been

stabilized over this period, but without a minimum price agreement prices continued to fluctuate according to the vagaries of the market and the manipulations of the fishing companies.

When the companies lowered prices to two cents a pound across the board in 1933, fishermen began agitating for a minimum price. Talk crystalized into action and the Seattle fleet tied up for a month over the issue. But the tieup failed to win a minimum price — and 40 years later halibut fishermen were still without a minimum price.

Although UFAWU longline fishermen have made several overtures to obtain joint action for a minimum price, lack of unity among halibut fishermen in the states of Washington and Alaska and weaknesses in such ports as Seattle, where the first tieup occurred, have frustrated all efforts. Share agreements with vessel owners have remained little changed over the years and the last strike in 1957, which was won by crewmen, centred on pay for gear work and payment of rental for echo sounders.

At the same time, big gains have been made in working conditions and through establishment of the halibut layup program. Jointly sponsored by halibut fishermen's organizations in British Columbia, Washington and Alaska and finally recognized by the International Pacific Halibut Commission, the self-imposed curtailment program provides for an eight-day period between trips for all vessels participating in the fishery. Without curtailment, fishermen were forced into irrational competition for quotas such as that which led in 1954 to the entire quota for Area 2 being taken in 21 days.

Now, once again, the industry is facing a crisis. For want of an international fisheries treaty embracing all countries fishing the North Pacific and covering all the fisheries affected by their operations, intensified trawl fishing by foreign fleets is decimating the halibut stocks and reversing the earlier achievements of the commission in restoring and building up the resource.

British Columbia herring fishermen have lost many seasons and all as a result of a monopoly policy which seeks maximum profits without regard for the consequences to the fishery.

This reckless disregard for conservation, in the decades when British Columbia was producing up to 200,000 tons of herring annually for reduction to fish meal — the record catch was 245,697 tons in 1956 — was reflected in the companies' espousal of spurious theories. Stocks were large enough to replenish themselves, it was argued, and therefore able to withstand unrestricted fishing.

The inevitable consequence of this attitude was the complete closure of the reduction fishery in 1967. Time and again the UFAWU had warned that over-exploitation was dangerously depleting the supposedly inexhaustible stocks. Repeatedly the union had urged on government the need to develop new markets to which herring could be shipped as a food. Finally there was neither sufficient herring to sustain an economic reduction operation nor markets to absorb the production of a good fishery.

In their quest for maximum profits from the reduction fishery, the companies bitterly resisted every attempt the fishermen made to improve their earnings and living standards, even to the extent of forcing lost seasons upon them. A case in point was the lost season of 1952 when fishermen struck rather than accept a price cut to $5.50 a ton.

But the companies conducted their biggest corporate ripoff in the winter of 1971-72 when the first major herring fishery operation since the closure of the reduction fishery four years earlier got under way.

A limited herring food fishery in the two previous years had established the fact that there was a lucrative market for herring roe in Japan — how lucrative fishermen were only to discover long after they had settled for a pittance.

The companies refused to divulge any information about prices. They concealed the potential importance of the market behind claims that it was limited by Japanese import restrictions. The UFAWU had no more than the few facts it could glean from Japanese publications to guide it in formulating price demands.

In drawing up these demands for food fishery operations from 1969 to 1971, herring fishermen were influenced by the rate of $17.40 a ton set in the last

George Miller (right), first president of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, talks with H. Steve Stavenes (centre), last president of the United Fishermen's Federal Union, and Percy Norton, outgoing president of the Fish Cannery, Reduction Plant and Allied Workers Union, at the Vancouver convention in 1945 which merged the two unions into one industrial organization. Earlier mergers already had taken the Salmon Purse Seiners Union, of which Miller was secretary, into the UFFU in 1940, and the Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union in 1942. Miller, who retired in 1951, was succeeded by Reg Payne, who served three terms in 1951-53, and then by Stavenes, who was returned to the office by acclamation for 16 years from 1954 until his retirement in 1970, when Homer Stevens, secretary since 1948, was elected to the post. First secretary-treasurer of the UFAWU was William Rigby, who became the union's first research director in 1948 and its first welfare director from 1957 until his death in 1965.

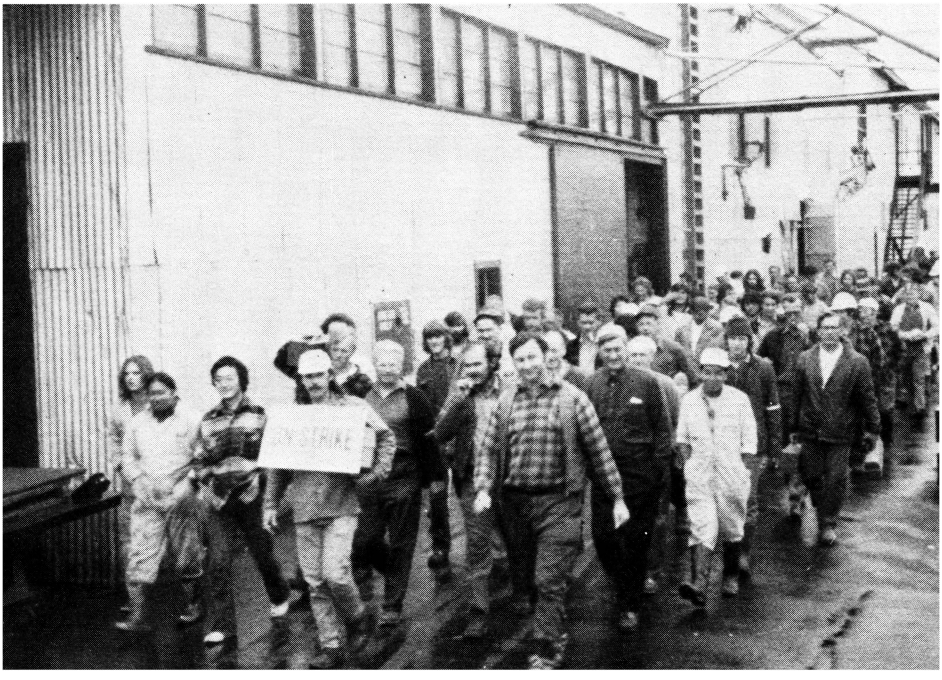
Jack Reid photo

TOP: Fishermen meeting at Duncanby, Rivers Inlet, to take a strike vote in 1959, when fishermen, tendermen and shoreworkers went out in the industry's first general strike.

BOTTOM: UFAWU patrol boats on the Fraser River in the 1959 strike.

TOP: Shoreworkers picket Canadian Fishing Company's Home plant in the 1963 industry-wide strike.

BOTTOM: Led by Barry Robbins (with placard), shoreworkers walk out of B.C. Packers' Imperial plant to set up picket lines in the 1973 industry-wide strike.



George Legebokoff photo

TOP: Fishing companies find it hard to exploit the "public interest" in salmon fishermen's strikes. The reason: UFAWU strike relief sales of salmon to the public at fishermen's contract asking prices and handling costs like this North Vancouver sale in 1963.

BOTTOM: UFAWU herring sales in New Westminster and Vancouver, such as this at False Creek in 1969, have become an annual event raising thousands of dollars for deserving causes, including $20,000 for the children's section of Vancouver Public Aquarium.

TOP: A UFAWU delegation, one of many over the years, parades to the legislature in 1952 to lobby for compulsory Workmen's Compensation coverage for all fishermen.

BOTTOM: Another UFAWU delegation, this one at Ottawa in 1963 demanding that the federal government refuse to ratify International North Pacific Fisheries Commission recommendations opening halibut and herring fisheries to Japan.

JAPAN GETS THE FISH!
WE GET THE CLOSURES!
LET THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON MARINE & FISHERIES MEET
We want a Full Hearing!
NANAIMO LOCAL
NEW WESTMINSTER LOCAL
NORTH DELTA DISTRICT LOCAL
THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

UFAWU members parade outside the Vancouver Hotel meeting of the Canadian section of International North Pacific Fisheries Commission in 1963 calling for protection of Canada's North Pacific fisheries and Canadian initiative in convening a new treaty conference of all nations fishing the North Pacific.

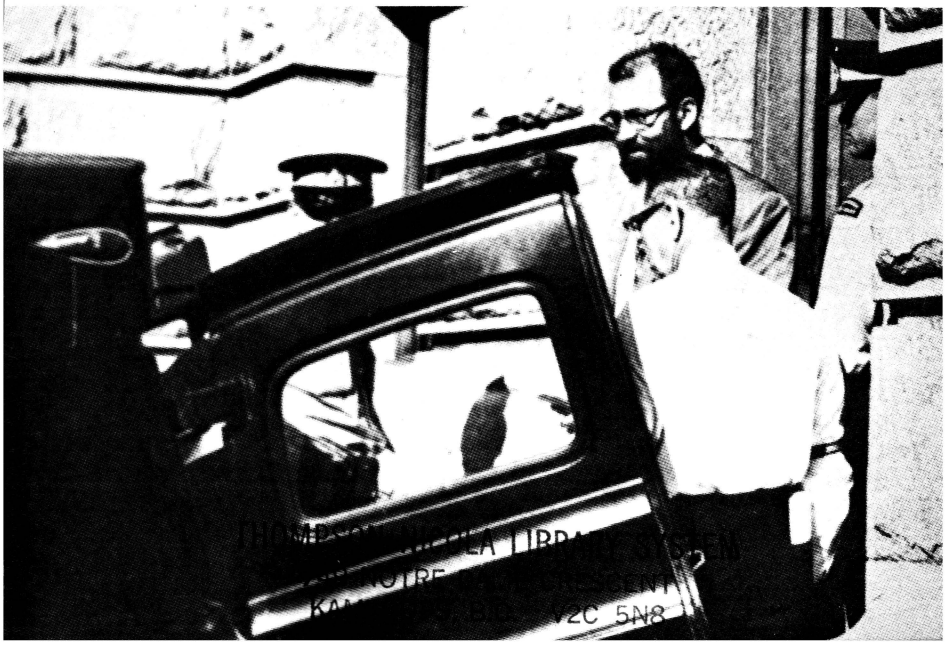
TOP: In one of many protests against the Davis Plan from its inception, UFAWU members picket the Vancouver offices of the federal Fisheries Service in 1971.

BOTTOM: UFAWU 1966 convention delegates leaving Vancouver City Hall grounds in a peace march to the U.S. consulate demanding an end to the war in Vietnam.

TOP: An investigator operating under the director of the Combines Investigation Act at UFAWU headquarters in 1956 sorting out some of the 3,000 union documents seized for study in proceedings against the union.
BOTTOM: Pickets at Prince Rupert protesting injunctions and contempt proceedings against UFAWU officers during the bitter trawl-longline dispute in 1967.

TOP: Smiling despite the severity of the one year sentences imposed upon them, UFAWU business agent Jack Nichol and president H. Steve Stavenes enter the police wagon at Vancouver court house after their conviction for contempt on June 19, 1967. The B.C. Court of Appeal subsequently quashed Nichol's conviction.

BOTTOM: "I could not betray my oath of office," UFAWU secretary Homer Stevens said in his statement to Mr. Justice T. A. Dohm, who afterward left the bench to head Vancouver Stock Exchange. Both Stavenes and Stevens, bearded in this photo, served their one year sentences, despite a strong labor campaign for their release.



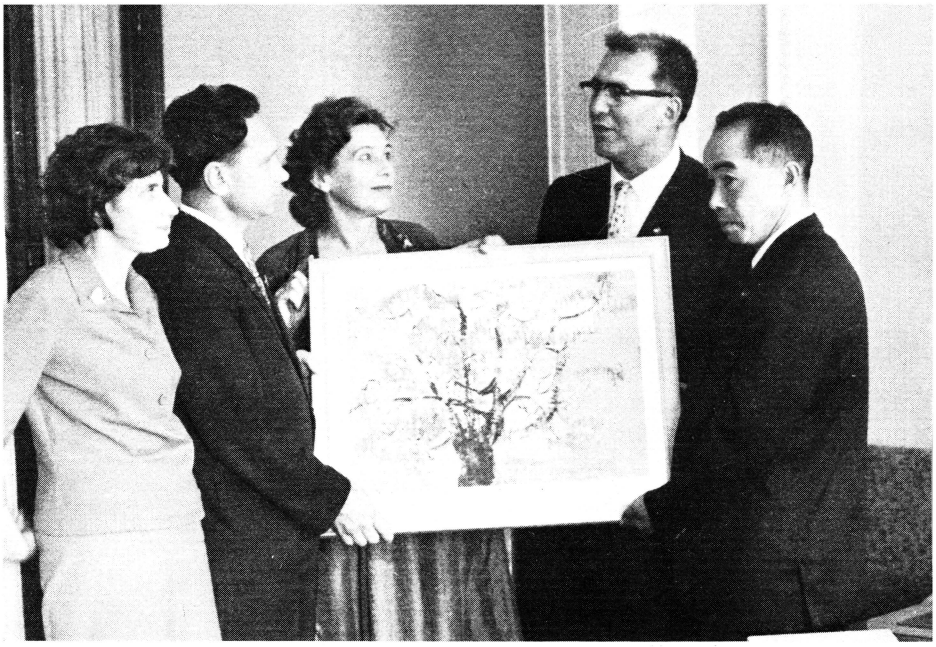
TOP: With its titled officers in jail, the UFAWU named Tom Parkin (left) as acting business agent, Elgin (Scotty) Neish (centre) as acting secretary, and T. (Buck) Suzuki as acting president.

BOTTOM: UFAWU president H. Steve Stavenes and his wife Karen (left) and secretary Homer Stevens and his wife Grace (right) are guests of honor at a celebration held in Fishermen's Hall, Vancouver, on September 27, 1968.

Walter Alliott photos

TOP: A fleet of fishing vessels mustered by the UFAWU, part of a larger armada of commercial and pleasure craft, stages a sail-in at English Bay on June 11, 1972, to protest the proposed transportation of Alaska oil by supertanker down the B.C. coast.

BOTTOM: Campaigning to clean up pollution of the Fraser River, the UFAWU stages a sail-in on December 2, 1972 to demand more than primary treatment of sewage at the Annacis Island plant.



TOP: UFAWU secretary Homer Stevens and small boat vice-president T. (Buck) Suzuki making a presentation to secretary Sergei Belyaev and other central committee members of the Soviet Food Workers Union at a reception in Moscow for members of a UFAWU delegation in 1965.

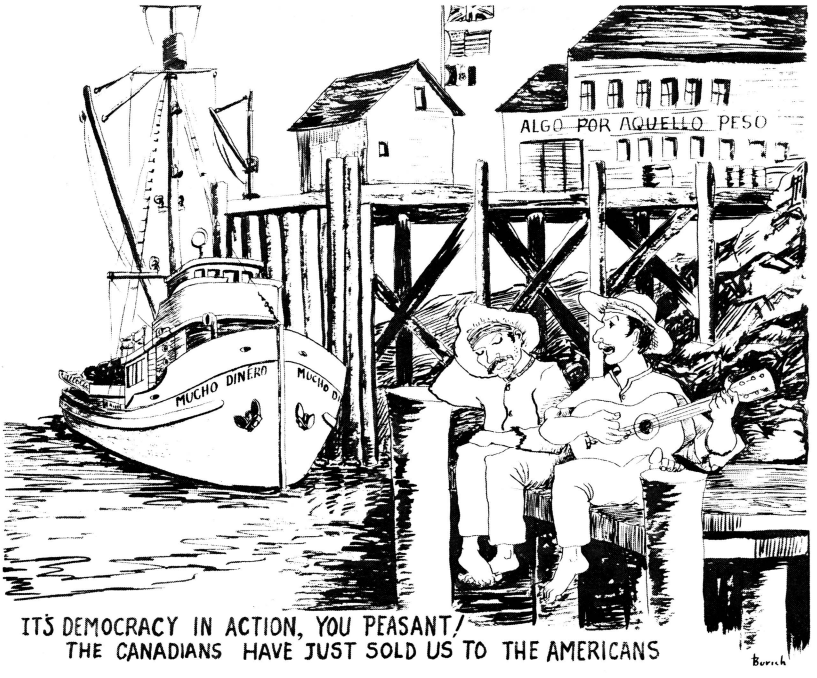
BOTTOM: Nina Matrossova, president of the Soviet Food Workers Union, stands with UFAWU secretary Jack Nichol (right foreground) in this photo taken in Moscow during the visit there of a UFAWU delegation in 1972. Other UFAWU delegates were Norma Jones (centre foreground) and Elgin (Scotty) Neish (centre rear).

Richard Morgan photo

Sergei Belyaev, secretary of the Soviet Food Workers Union, examining a plaque presented to him by the UFAWU when a delegation from the Soviet trade union visited British Columbia in 1973. Looking on are interpreter Vladimir Kirilov and Timofei Tokharev, chairman of the Soviet Food Workers' Sakhalin regional committee (right) and UFAWU president Homer Stevens (left).

TOP: Ending an enforced 20-year absence from the central councils of labor, UFAWU president Homer Stevens (centre) receives the union's Canadian Labor Congress charter from (left to right) CLC executive vice-president Jean Beaudry, secretary William Dodge, president Donald MacDonald and executive vice-president Joe Morris at a formal presentation at Ottawa in May, 1973.

BOTTOM: The first UFAWU delegates are sworn in by president Syd Thompson at Vancouver and District Labor Council on February 6, 1973. This photo shows (left to right) William Procopation, Hal Griffin, Don Taylor, Mike Iverson, Homer Stevens, George Hewison, Mike James, Morris Anderson, Mickey Beagle, John Stevens, Belle Setynski, Roy Burnell, Harry Allison, Ed Simmonds, Joe Setynski and Helen O'Shaughnessy.
John Rutka photo


ALGO POR AQUELLO PESO
MUCHO DINERO
MUCHO D
ITS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION, YOU PEASANT/
THE CANADIANS HAVE JUST SOLD US TO THE AMERICANS
Burich

Since its first printed edition was issued on June 6, 1938, **The Fisherman** has published the work of several talented cartoonists in the fishing industry, among them Sam Burich and Ken Homer, whose cartoons are reproduced on this page.

A superb draughtsman and one of the country's outstanding labor cartoonists, Roy Carless has been drawing cartoons regularly for **The Fisherman** since 1972.

reduction fishery in 1967-68 which constituted the only firm floor for a new rate structure. The companies insisted that the new food fishery was largely experimental to determine in what forms herring might be processed for certain markets. The outcome of negotiations was agreement on a price of $24 a ton.

In negotiations for the 1971-72 fishery, the union, still without detailed information on prices being paid to the companies by Japanese buyers, settled for a modest increase to $28.50 a ton, rising to $30 after February 5, 1972. Only in the months following did it become apparent that the companies, taking full advantage of a rapidly expanding Japanese roe market, were selling this same herring for up to $600 a ton.

Angered by the ripoff, fishermen were in no mood to accept the companies' proposal for a rate of $45 a ton when negotiations opened for the 1972-73 roe herring agreement. Herring seine fishermen rejected the $45 offer, demanded $75 and won $72. Herring gillnet fishermen, with seiners' support, tied up their boats for $200 a ton, rejected offers of $168 and $170 and won $183 a ton.

As UFAWU president Homer Stevens noted, the union's asking price of $75 a ton for seine caught herring "would still leave the companies a margin of at least $211 a ton and possibly more — how much more it's difficult to ascertain in view of the companies' refusal to table information."

The herring fishery, and the reduction operation in particular, has taken a heavy toll of men and boats, recorded in such tragedies as the *Northview,* sunk in Finlayson Channel on February 23, 1961, with loss of all eight men aboard; the *Combat,* missing in Hecate Strait on March 10, 1965, with seven men aboard; the *Ocean Star,* lost off Cape Mudge on January 29, 1966, with her crew of seven, all from Sointula.

The widows and orphans of such tragedies have benefited from a welfare plan set up in 1947 on the basis of five cents — 40 cents in 1974 — a ton of green herring. Benefits in 1974, applying to all fishermen and tendermen covered by the recently amalgamated United Fishermen's Welfare Fund, included $3,500 for adult dependents —

the original amount was $500 — and $250 for each dependent child. $60 week wor the first 15 weeks of illness, $1,000 total disability payment, and $300 shipwreck benefit.

It took more than 20 years of intermittent struggle for trawlers on the Pacific coast to obtain a signed share and working conditions agreement. Fresh fish firms headed by B.C. Packers and Canadian Fishing Company resisted their demands at every point, aware that whatever they were forced to concede on this coast would be reflected in the struggle of trawlers on the Atlantic coast to organize and win collective agreements.

British Columbia trawlers started organizing in 1946 and the following year they presented a set of minimum price demands below which no operations would be conducted after February 22. Backed by shoreworkers who announced that they would not handle "hot" fish, they were joined by Prince Rupert trawlers and Gulf of Georgia trollers and cod fishermen. But after a month on strike, they were forced to beat a "temporary organized retreat," a decision influenced to some extent by the fact that the Co-op fleet was on the grounds.

In the meantime, Nova Scotia trawlers, fighting their own bitter battle for union recognition and signed agreements, were battered into submission. Their union, the Canadian Fishermen's Union, was smashed and the companies could continue to set prices and cheat the fishermen on weights and grades as they had done for decades.

In 1952, operators pointed with approval to prevailing conditions on the Atlantic coast smashing a two-month trawl tieup aided by strikebreakers from the owners of trawl vessels at Campbell Avenue.

Canadian Fishing Company shoreworkers refused to handle a load of "hot" fish brought in by Sam Peterson's trawler *Cape Norman*. Mr. Justice A. M. Manson, notorious for his anti-labor decisions, quickly issued an injunction ordering the workers to unload the catch. "Injunctions cannot catch fish," the union declared. "Fish handled under an injunction threat will smell just as bad as if it had rotted at the dock." (Ironically, it was Manson

who, in 1959, charged George North, then editor of *The Fisherman*, with contempt for an editorial objecting to another of his many injunctions, later found to be improper, that ordered striking ironworkers back to their jobs on the hazardous Second Narrows bridge — the courts handed out unprecedentedly severe sentences of 30 days and a $3,000 fine.)

The strikebreaking activities of the "Campbell Avenue gang" and the adamant opposition of the big operators to a price agreement "in principle" forced the fleet to call off the strike by the end of June, 1952, when vessels were being diverted to salmon.

Although the companies have continued to control bottomfish prices almost at will, in 1967 trawl fishermen in the south, after several months ashore, did succeed in establishing a share agreement which cut off one area of manipulation in division of the catch and established working conditions aboard vessels. As in previous trawl strikes, every anti-labor tactic from scabbing to injunctions was used against the trawl fishermen, including a backdoor agreement by another union, raiding, and costly civil suits against the UFAWU for damages.

In contempt of court actions launched by the provincial government against the UFAWU and its leaders for allegedly defying an injunction to end the strike, vindictive one year sentences were imposed on UFAWU president H. (Steve) Stavenes, a veteran of many struggles in his long career as a unionist in the fishing industry, and Homer Stevens, the union's secretary-treasurer. A third officer, business agent Jack Nichol, had his conviction quashed by the appeal court, on a legal technicality. The UFAWU, as a legal entity, was fined $25,000.

As an outcome of the 1967 trawl dispute, members of the Prince Rupert Fishing Vessel Owners Association launched a civil suit against the UFAWU, winning a judgment which was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, for more than $108,000, as well as legal and other costs.

The final chapter in this area has yet to be written, but the need for a price agreement remains unsatisfied

and there can be no doubt that trawl fishermen will continue their struggle until it is.

The United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, born and raised in British Columbia, began looking beyond its provincial borders as it became evident that lack of union organization elsewhere in the country, and particularly on the Atlantic coast, was a threat to its own hard won contracts in B.C. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the trawl fishery, engaged on both coasts in operations for similar species of fish.

The UFAWU had considered organizing lake fishermen in Manitoba, but it turned its attention to the Atlantic coast where a major herring fishery developed during the sixties, attracting B.C. fishery capital, boats, and experienced men. A union committee surveyed the situation, recommending that an organizational campaign be undertaken, and the union entered the field in Nova Scotia.

The organizational campaign was launched early in 1967, on the eve of the trawl-longline dispute in British Columbia. There is no doubt that the fishing companies' ultimate objective in the B.C. conflict was to destroy militant union organization in the fishing industry in its traditional stronghold. They also calculated that the UFAWU would be so occupied in fending off the full weight of the forces arraigned against it — the Social Credit provincial government, the courts, the fishing companies, the Prince Rupert Fishing Vessel Owners, raiders, strikebreakers and scabs — that it would be unable to concentrate on its organizational campaign in Nova Scotia. And at the same time, the fishing companies used the struggle in B.C. to mount a red-baiting scare campaign against the union in the Maritimes.

Despite all this, by 1969 the union had established a foothold in Nova Scotia, centering its activities on scallop and bottomfish trawl fishermen in Lunenburg, Pubnico-Yarmouth, Mulgrave, Canso and Petit de Grat. In several areas fishermen organized into the UFAWU had established locals and named their own organizers.

One early result of the union's entry into the field was that the companies ran scared. National Sea Products at Lunenburg signed an agreement with the previously dis-

interested Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers granting union recognition. The Canadian Food and Allied Workers Union, a division of the U.S. based Amalgamated Meatcutters, which had been given jurisdiction over fishermen by the Canadian Labor Congress although it had virtually no organization in the fishing industry, also began showing interest in fishermen in the Maritimes. But whatever prospect there may have been of the UFAWU merging with the Canadian Food and Allied Workers as the designated appropriate affiliate through which it could enter the CLC went glimmering when the Canadian Food and Allied Workers concluded "sweetheart" agreements in the Canso Strait area. After the bitter seven-month strike conducted by the UFAWU at Canso. Mulgrave and Petit de Grat, the Canadian Food and Allied Workers Union concluded a "recognition" agreement with Booth Fisheries at Petit de Grat providing that only its members could hold jobs in the company's operations.

In the immediate sense, the UFAWU was defeated in the Canso Strait area strike, despite the impressive support it received from the labor and farmer movements and the sacrifices made by the strikers, some of whom were sent to jail. In a larger sense, the UFAWU began a transformation of the fishing industry in the Maritimes, breaking down the archaic relations between the big fishing companies and the men who fished for them. It proved to fishermen that they were not powerless against the companies, gave them an understanding of what organization could accomplish and forced the companies to concede union recognition, although unions other than the UFAWU were the beneficiaries.

6. 'United We Stand'

The UFAWU had been through such situations before, as in 1953 when the Seafarers International Union under racketeer president Hal Banks made its abortive raid, aided by the discredited B.C. Gillnetters Association.

The SIU had been invited to this country by an unholy alliance of Great Lakes shipping interests, the Trades and Labor Congress leadership and the Liberal government to smash and take over the jurisdiction of the striking Canadian Seamen's Union in 1949, on a wave of hysterical red-baiting.

That same wave was used to exclude UFAWU leaders Elgin (Scotty) Neish, Reg Payne, George Miller, Homer Stevens, William Rigby and former TLC vice-president Alex Gordon from the right to represent their union at TLC conventions and councils. The grounds for excluding Neish and president Reg Payne incredibly were membership in the Victoria Peace Council and support for the Stockholm Peace Appeal to outlaw A-Bombs, a mild document by today's standards.

The SIU raid came within hours of the Trades and Labor Congress executive's announcement, made shortly

after the conclusion of the Ottawa convention in 1953, that it was suspending the UFAWU. An editorial in *The Fisherman,* flatly declaring that "Raiding simply cannot be condoned under any circumstances . . .", provided the pretext for the suspension. President Percy Bengough was rankled because the TLC, after suspending the Vancouver Outside Civic Workers, was unsuccessfully attempting to take over its jurisdiction. Moreover, Bengough was concerned that this was "aiding and abetting defiance of the constitution of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada."

The suspension itself, Bengough announced later, would remain in effect until the UFAWU gave "proof of taking all reasonable and necessary measures to rid itself of communist leadership and leanings . . ."

By contrast, speaking to the 1948 UFAWU convention, Bengough had congratulated the UFAWU and its officers "for the good job that has been accomplished and the wonderful progress you have made."

McCarthyism in the labor movement by that time already had resulted in expulsion from the TLC and Canadian Congress of Labor of several unions, among them the United Electrical Workers, Mine-Mill, and Fur and Leather Workers, as well as the Canadian Seamen's Union, ushering in an era of disunity and fratricidal conflict which cost the working people dearly.

But these were days of contradiction and policy reversals. The TLC leadership had abandoned its slogan, "Cooperation Yes — Domination No," to adopt an attitude of supine subservience to the executive council of the American Federation of Labor. The UFAWU, on the other hand, supported the Canadian Seamen's Union throughout its Great Lakes strike, the sellout of its former leader, Pat Sullivan, SIU scabbery, and police brutality and maintained that support even after the TLC turned on and cast out its affiliate in 1949. Business agent Alex Gordon, elected TLC vice-president in 1947, withdrew his name from the ballot at the Victoria convention in 1948 to assure united support for the seamen.

The UFAWU appealed its suspension to the TLC convention in 1954 on grounds that remained valid over the years: the right of the UFAWU to run its own affairs

on the basis of its democratic constitution without outside interference.

In 1956, the TLC and CCL amalgamated to form the present Canadian Labor Congress and the following year the B.C. Federation of Labor, at its second annual convention, called on the CLC to consider affiliating independent unions which met "requirements." Essentially, the requirements were that applications reflected "good faith" and a willingness to abide by CLC principles and policies.

On the basis of the federation's stand, the UFAWU formally applied for entry in a letter to Claude Jodoin, then president of the CLC. The letter contained an assurance that the UFAWU would abide by the CLC constitution and policies, adding that "activities of our union are open to examination by you (Jodoin)."

No definite response was received from the congress although there was a continuing exchange of correspondence with Jodoin. Finally, in March, 1960, Jodoin wrote, "As for your application, it is still in abeyance and will remain so until you have established to the satisfaction of the executive council the eligibility of your union in conformity with the relevant provisions of the constitution . . ."

After the UFAWU had sought clarification of what exactly was meant by "eligibility," Jodoin replied tersely on April 13, "I will submit your communication to the forthcoming executive council meeting of the CLC." Nothing more was heard from the CLC.

On October 17, 1967, UFAWU officers, acting on instructions from the union's general executive board, wrote to Donald MacDonald, then acting CLC president, again applying for affiliation. MacDonald sought written assurances the UFAWU would abide by the CLC constitution, policies and principles — something the UFAWU felt was self-evident in its decision to seek entry. MacDonald also requested information on the number, size and location of all UFAWU locals.

On October 28, 1967, the UFAWU submitted a list of locals, the membership total in each and names and addresses of local officers. It also placed formally into

writing its "willingness to conform to the constitution, principles and policies of the CLC."

MacDonald's reply on February 28, 1968, said the application had been considered by the executive council and it had been decided the UFAWU "should seek entry through the medium of an existing affiliate with appropriate jurisdiction."

This was one of the first indications that the alleged "proliferation" of unions in a given field was going to supplant other methods of forestalling the affiliation of independent unions.

Some inconclusive meetings were held between the UFAWU and the United Packing House Workers, which subsequently became the Canadian Food and Allied Workers Union, designated as the "appropriate affiliate," and the door was left open to exploratory talks with other unions as well. But, as Jack Nichol, then UFAWU business agent, stressed in a letter to MacDonald on March 29, 1968, the union's preference continued to be for "direct affiliation as quickly as possible . . ."

On April 8, MacDonald said the executive council had "reaffirmed its previous position that the UFAWU seek congress affiliation through an appropriate affiliate."

These events served as the backdrop to growing demands that merger must not be enforced as a precondition of UFAWU entry into the CLC. Throughout this period, successive conventions of the B.C. Federation of Labor voiced strong support for direct UFAWU membership while opposition to the merger edict assumed major proportions at conventions of the CLC itself.

From 1967 onward, in fact, the issue of UFAWU affiliation generated some of the liveliest debates on labor unity heard at federation convention, becoming sharper in tone as each year went by with no positive response from the CLC.

At the 1967 convention of the federation, debate centred mainly around resolutions calling for all-inclusive labor unity in general terms. But speakers favoring the resolutions, which carried almost unanimously, focussed attention on the UFAWU.

In 1968, a platform statement again favoring unity in

general terms — but ignoring specific demands for action on the UFAWU application — was rejected as being too weak. Delegates finally approved a compromise statement urging the CLC to increase efforts to "obtain the reaffiliation of such unions as the Fishermen . . ."

The 1969 convention went further, calling on the CLC to "act expeditiously" on the UFAWU application and spelling out the role federation officers were expected to play in achieving that goal.

At the 1970 convention, delegates referred back to committee a resolution they felt was inadequate and impractical, later adopting a resolution reiterating their support for "bringing the Fishermen's Union into the CLC — now" and reminding congress bluntly that it was "the overwhelming desire of this federation that the UFAWU return to the house of labor." Patience was wearing thin by this time and the debate reflected a mounting sense of frustration and determination.

In 1971, previous stands on the UFAWU issue were reaffirmed in even more direct language, with fire concentrated on the merger edict and the fact that congress had not chosen to impose similar conditions on other unions accepted into affiliation.

The federation convention in 1972 heard particularly sharp criticism of the CLC executive for continuing to stall UFAWU entry. CLC secretary William Dodge was present for much of the debate, later assuring delegates he had "got the message loud and clear and will take it back to the (CLC) executive council . . . you can hope for a favorable decision."

As a form of insurance, delegates subsequently endorsed a policy statement in which federation officers said they would call a special meeting of their executive if the CLC meeting in December produced no results. The special meeting of the federation executive would "consider all possible courses of action to carry out the wishes of this convention," the statement declared.

At the CLC level, entry of the UFAWU was a major topic of debate at the congress conventions of 1968, 1970 and 1972.

Over 40 local unions and labor councils submitted resolutions favoring direct entry of the UFAWU to the

1970 Edmonton convention. Choosing to interpret this as a sinister challenge to their authority, congress officers worked strenuously to defeat the unity demands, finally winning majority support for their position that the UFAWU must merge as the price of affiliation.

But at the 1972 Ottawa convention, there were renewed and intensified demands for admission of the UFAWU and UE, the latter having made formal application in 1970.

CLC delegates were in no mood to accept platform recommendations which again rejected resolutions supporting UFAWU and UE membership. After a stormy debate and a good deal of procedural in-fighting, the issue was tossed back to the incoming congress executive with the clear understanding that it should be dealt with in light of the strong pro-unity feeling pervading the convention.

In December, 1972, 19 years after its suspension from the TLC, the UFAWU was formally notified by the CLC executive that its application for affiliation had been accepted.

"The officers and executive members of the congress extend a warm welcome to officers and members of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union and are confident your affiliation with us will be beneficial both to you and the labor movement of Canada," Dodge wrote in his letter of December 8.

The Fisherman, in its editorial comment, hailed admission of the UFAWU and UE as the most significant development of 1972 for organized labor.

"So long as these two unions were denied their place in the councils of labor by reason of their principled opposition to cold war policies, labor as a whole was the weaker," it said "And in British Columbia recognition of this fact has long been reflected in the many resolutions calling for admission of the UFAWU into the CLC adopted by individual unions and successive conventions of the B.C. Federation of Labor.

"Now, as they did in the thirties and forties, and as they have done in innumerable struggles over the past 20 years despite their formal exclusion, organized fishermen and shoreworkers can go forward as equals in the ranks of labor."

While it fought for its rightful place in the labor movement, the UFAWU had to struggle at every turn for legal recognition of the rights of its fishermen members as workers.

British Columbia fishing companies have always argued that fishermen are "co-adventurers" — participants in an enterprise and therefore not workers in a legal sense. This contention has saved them millions of dollars in workmen's compensation premiums alone. The same contention has been the foundation of their claim, advanced in one form or another since 1893, that the union is an unlawful "conspiracy".

That is what two scabs contended in 1952 and what four other strikebreakers argued in the 1954 tendermen's tieup in cases started by the lawyer who subsequently became Mr. Justice T. G. Norris. Despite the filing of affidavits, neither case was pursued. Instead, the scabs, the Gillnetters Association and the companies took action under the Combines Investigation Act at the taxpayers' expense.

The attack on the UFAWU under the Combines Investigation Act, initiated when investigators seized union records in May, 1956, was unexpected because the act specifically excludes "combinations of workmen or employees" from its scope. Boats are one of the tools of a fisherman's trade — whether the traditional rowboat of yesteryear or today's costly power vessel with its modern electronic equipment.

While it culminated in the filing of reports upholding the charge that the union was a "combine" because fishermen were businessmen and not workers within the meaning of the act, the action ground to a halt in face of the union's vigorous defence — its charge that the real combine in the British Columbia fishing industry was the monopoly controlled by George Weston Ltd. and Canadian Fishing Company and its demand that these companies reveal information they had every reason to conceal. What these reasons were became apparent in later years when it was disclosed that the British controlled Weston interests owned not only B.C. Packers but

a number of its supposedly independent competitors, chief among them Nelson Brothers Ltd.

The companies attempted to cut off bargaining after the report came down in 1959 but fishermen voted almost unanimously not to fish without contracts, revitalizing their long standing cry of "No contracts, no fish!" Finally the impasse was resolved when parliament passed special legislation exempting the 1959-60 agreements, and now the exclusion of salmon minimum price contracts is embodied in this rather shaky legislation. The victory will only be complete when all fishermen are recognized in labor and social legislation as the workmen they obviously are in fact.

This same anomaly was overcome in 1957 when the UFAWU campaign for unemployment insurance coverage finally came to fruition. Fishermen were excluded from the act until the union made it a major public issue, sent delegations to Ottawa, and won support from James Sinclair during his tenure as minister of fisheries. The plan providing coverage to fishermen, as subsequently incorporated in the act, has weaknesses that would have been overcome by the union's original proposal to issue stamps on the basis of a weekly rate divided into a fishermen's total earnings. This would have excluded those with high incomes from benefits during the prosperous years, at the same time assisting fishermen with low earnings. But inclusion of fishermen in the Unemployment Insurance scheme is constantly under attack, most recently from Jack Davis, whose environment portfolio includes fisheries. His proposal, by no means original, is to remove fishermen from the general scheme and place them in a separate scheme.

Possibly the most sustained legislative campaign conducted by the UFAWU has been the fight to establish workmen's compensation coverage for all fishermen. Its briefs and presentations have cited numerous cases of widows and children being left without support and countless fishermen suffering injury at their hazardous trade with nothing to sustain them in time of need.

Two forerunners of the UFAWU , the Salmon Purse Seiners Union and Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union advanced a legislative program calling for compensation

for all fishermen and other workers in the fishing industry. Delegations went to Victoria year after year in their efforts to get coverage extended to men not on charter or rental boats. William Rigby, the union's founding secretary and later its first welfare director, made brilliant, exhaustive presentations to two royal commissions without success. The operators, adhering to their contention that fishermen were independent businessmen and should pay their own premiums, admitted under Rigby's piercing questioning that big salmon vessels were not free to fish where they wished. Their spokesman, E. L. Harrison, was forced to admit that "I think probably the operator will persuade them to go where they want to go."

The most dramatic of the union's campaigns was mounted in 1952, when a flotilla of fish boats sailed into Victoria's inner harbor displaying slogans and a delegation of 200 men and women descended on legislators with a plea for the six in every 10 fishermen excluded from benefits.

One Victoria woman impressed with the union's case for compensation coverage voiced her support in these words:

"The fishermen who brave the sea
Are workmen fundamentally;
If they cease working, pray tell me
Where would the packers' be?"

Members of the CCF, now the New Democratic Party, and Social Credit backed the union's demands. But when Social Credit surged into government office soon afterward it went back on its promise, resisting the union's continuing demand throughout its 20 years in power. Its only concession was in 1955 when it brought down a voluntary coverage scheme for so-called "independent" fishermen. The UFAWU has never accepted the principle of voluntary coverage but has promoted the plan while continuing its fight to win coverage for all fishermen as workmen under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Now, the demand for rectification of this long standing social injustice is being directed to the NDP, which likewise had failed to honor its earlier commitment in its first year of office.

7. Campaigns and More Campaigns

The history of the fishing industry clearly shows that, directly or indirectly, companies have always controlled the fishermen and their production. Moreover, the industry has witnessed an escalating process of monopolization, reinforced by the Davis Plan, which has concentrated power in the hands of two foreign controlled companies, B.C. Packers Ltd., a subsidiary of the British controlled Weston food combine, and Canadian Fishing Company, a subsidiary of the U.S. owned New England Fishing Company.

Formed in 1902, as B.C. Packers Association, incorporated as B.C. Fishing and Packing Company 12 years later, B.C. Packers assumed its present title in 1928 in the wake of an expansion program which involved the takeover of several firms, among them Gosse Packing Company and Millerd Packing Company.

In the past two decades, major takeovers by B.C. Packers have included Colonial Packers, J. H. Todd and Sons and, in 1960, Nelson Bros. Fisheries.

The ability of corporate empires to conceal their inner workings was reflected in the nine-year lapse bet-

ween the takeover of Nelson Bros. and B.C. Packers' disclosure in 1969 that it had acquired its supposed competitor as a wholly owned subsidiary.

Similarly, it was not until 1966 that partial disclosure was made of the fact that B.C. Packers, supposedly controlled by the H. R. MacMillan interests, had been taken over by George Weston Ltd. some four or five years earlier.

Canadian Fishing Company, wholly owned by the New England Fishing Company of Boston, moved into the B.C. fishing industry before the turn of the century and into the salmon canning business in 1918. Among the firms it swallowed up over the years were Johnstone Fishing and Packing, North Shore Packing and J. H. Todd and Sons, the latter on an equal partnership basis with B.C. Packers.

More recently, particularly since disclosure of the Weston-B.C. Packers-Nelson Bros. relationship, there has been growing speculation about the possibility of an intercorporate link between B.C. Packers and Canadian Fishing Company.

As UFAWU president Homer Stevens said in 1969 when he was asked to comment on the news that Nelson Bros. was, after all, just another Weston branch plant operation, "How do we know that the Weston empire hasn't already bought a large interest in New England Fishing Company, Canfisco's parent? Or whether New England hasn't bought into B.C. Packers or in some other way invested in the giant Weston food complex?"

Confronted at all turns by the impact and consequences of monopoly control, fishermen have learned that a unified policy of mutual protection is the only means of advancing their economic and political interests. Recognition of this fact led to the formation of the UFAWU and to the conclusion that licence limitation can be effective for one gear only if it is equally effective for all others.

Nowhere has UFAWU conservation policy had a greater impact than in the salmon fishery, as illustrated by three of the many public campaigns it has conducted over the years.

The UFAWU was largely responsible for having pink

salmon brought under the control of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission and for establishing the fifty-fifty division between Canadian and U.S. fleets which, ironically, the U.S. state department is now seeking to pervert into a perpetual claim on Fraser River salmon runs.

On April 19, 1955, the union arranged an historic three-hour meeting at White Rock attended by 148 representatives of salmon fishermen and vessel owners from both sides of the border. While U.S. seine boat owners blocked united action on the principle of equal catch division, the meeting set in motion the movement which culminated in the "protocol" under which the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission is responsible for conservation, rehabilitation and equal catch division of Fraser River pink runs.

The union had been pressing for equal catch division at an increasing tempo from the early fifties, pointing out that in 1947 U.S. fishermen took three times the Canadian catch and more than double the Canadian catch the following year. Equal division has meant many millions of dollars for B.C. fishermen, indicated by the fact that Canadians would have been entitled to an additional 3.5 million pinks in 1947 alone.

The policy advocated by James Sinclair as minister of fisheries of outfishing the Americans by moving out into the Pacific was never endorsed by the UFAWU, which saw the danger this posed for salmon stocks. In fact, the union wanted a return to the river fishery on which so many old time fishermen depended. It proposed that Canada declare the 12-mile limit as a first step in bargaining for an extended treaty, but another decade had passed before the government made its first hesitant moves in this direction.

The union did, however, play a significant part in establishing the present surf line principle beyond which no salmon net fishing may be done, an arrangement vital to the scientific assessment of run size and escapement. The big loophole is in Alaska, where the principles of the line have been ignored in order that Alaskan fishermen may intercept salmon runs bound for northern B.C. streams.

The UFAWU had allies within the fishing industry in 1951 when it first warned of the dangers inherent in the International North Pacific Fisheries Teaty but gradually the fishing companies, the vessel owners and the co-ops withdrew their opposition under U.S. and Canadian government pressure. Then, in an article in *The Fisherman* of July 17, 1951, the union sounded the alarm against the impending sellout of Canadian fishermen and "equal betrayal of U.S. and Alaska fishermen."

Within a few weeks, fishermen on the grounds had seized on the issue. "No peace treaty without protection of the fisheries of the Northeast Pacific Ocean" read a hastily scrawled petition from Fort Langley fishermen which was quickly signed by scores of Fraser River gillnetters. The union moved into a full-fledged public information campaign based on the simple policy that the "sole objective" of any pact with Japan "should be prevention of Japanese fishing interests invading or participating in those species of fish which together comprise the raw material of the Canadian fishing industry."

Canada's first act of capitulation to U.S. pressure came when it signed the Japanese peace treaty without fisheries protection. The second came when Canadian representatives went to Tokyo without a draft treaty, apparently willing to base themselves on a U.S. protocol devised by the U.S. state department under John Foster Dulles.

The union climaxed its widely-backed opposition to the pact with public meetings, a special four-page supplement, and 14,000 postcards. Elmore Philpott, Liberal MP for Vancouver South, wrote in his *Vancouver Sun* column that "No treaty is better than a bad treaty," and by March, 1952, chief negotiator R. W. Mayhew, minister of fisheries, was announcing that the treaty would be shelved until it had gone to the House of Commons committee on marine and fisheries. Appearing for the union in his capacity of secretary, Homer Stevens prefaced his case with the declaration, "It is not in our national interest to concede the right of any country in the world to deplete the resources upon which our growing population is now dependent."

The union succeeded in focussing public attention on the issue, exposing Canadian complicity in the U.S. policy of appeasing Japan with fisheries concessions in return for military bases as part of its cold war strategy, but the federal government capitulated. The Japanese mid-ocean fleet, which in 1952 consisted of three salmon motherships and 50 catcher boats, expanded swiftly, and within a cycle, runs of British Columbia chum salmon had begun their dramatic decline. Alaska salmon runs have been decimated to the extent that Bristol Bay has experienced a number of "disaster" years. And now the halibut fishery, scientifically restored by conservation policies which demanded sacrifice by U.S. and Canadian fishermen, is declining as a result of unrestricted Japanese and Soviet trawl fishing in the North Pacific.

Not only is Canada suffering the consequences of a sterile, short-sighted policy which its organized fishermen strove to prevent, but it is perpetuating those consequences, again ignoring the demands of its organized fishermen, by refusing to take the initiative in convening a conference of all countries fishing the North Pacific to write a new treaty which would reflect their common interest in conserving the fisheries.

The proposed Moran Dam on the Fraser River north of Lillooet has loomed as a threat to major salmon runs since it was first proposed in 1951 and, alarmingly, regarded favorably by E. C. Carson, Conservative public works minister. in the Coalition provincial government. Even earlier the UFAWU had successfully staved off efforts to divert Chilko water into Bute Inlet.

The Coalition government was swept out of office in 1952 but three years later its Social Credit successor indicated its own interest in the Moran Dam scheme by placing a reserve on potential flood land between Lillooet and Quesnel. All sections of the fishing industry reacted with sharp expressions of opposition, but it was obvious that the proposal had influential advocates prepared to rationalize the sacrifice of Fraser River salmon fisheries for hydro power development.

The UFAWU carried the fight to the public through floats in Pacific National Exhibition parades, displays and lectures, and by distributing informational material — one

pamphlet, *Well, I'll Be Damned,* prepared by Tom Parkin, the union's public relations officer, attracted widespread attention to the issue.

The campaign brought together fisheries organizations, conservation and wildlife groups, trade unions and labor councils, all of whose efforts had the support of the federal fisheries department. In face of public opposition, the Social Credit government retreated, although it was apparent from statements made from time to time by such advocates as B.C. Hydro chairman Dr. Gordon Shrum that the scheme had not been abandoned.

Premier W.A.C. Bennett himself was on record as favoring construction of the Moran Dam as "the cheapest and most pollution free source of power for British Columbia," and despite his assurance that it would not proceed "until the fish problem can be solved," a new energy study including the Moran Dam was being made in 1972 and only the defeat of the Social Credit government thwarted a determined bid to revive the scheme.

The same tunnel vision persists in many quarters, seeing only the potential hydro-electric power of the Moran Dam and recking little of the consequences to the fishing industry. Since it is to be expected that the scheme will be advanced again as a solution to energy needs, the salient points made by *The Fisherman* in a special supplement published in August, 1971 stand as a warning for the future.

"Of the Fraser River's total salmon rearing capacity, close to 70 percent lies above Moran," the paper noted. "Not only would this be lost for future development, but changes in river flow and termperatures created by the dam could cause substantial losses to the remaining salmon runs below the dam.

"Construction of the Moran Dam would alter the ecology not only of the Fraser River but of the delta and the Gulf of Georgia, which serves as a nursery area for young salmon . . .

"If every river in British Columbia and the Yukon were dammed from source to mouth, the power produced would be sufficient only to supply projected needs until the mid-nineties. Moran Dam alone could satisfy British Columbia's anticipated power demand for two years if

completed in the early eighties, for less than one year by the end of the century . . ."

Similarly, the campaign for creation of a coast guard was conducted over a period of more than two decades before the need was given more than verbal recognition by the federal government.

At its founding convention on March 13, 1945, the UFAWU took over the campaign from its predecessors by calling for formation of "a coastwise life-saving service equipped with modern sea-going life-saving vessels manned by capable and experienced seamen with local knowledge of the British Columbia coast."

But it was to be 15 years before the federal government bowed to the public demand generated by the Central Council of Women's Auxiliaries to the UFAWU which, with the union's full support, carried the campaign for a coast guard wherever it could get a hearing. The campaign had the most compelling of all arguments. Every season lives were being lost that otherwise might have been saved and too often the wives and children of the fishermen lost at sea were left even without compensation.

In December, 1959 the coast guard committee of the women's auxiliaries and the union's standing committee on safety at sea presented George Pearkes, then defence minister in the Diefenbaker Conservative government, with a 7,200-name petition supporting a seven-point program. The program asked for "integration and coordination of all existing government vessels with a control centre which will be kept informed of their movements at all times" and "construction of at least three coast guard cutters or conversion of existing units for this purpose, each unit to have helicopter support."

The UFAWU followed this up in January, 1960 by convening a conference of maritime unions and other organizations to press for governmental action and in March the UFAWU convention advanced interim proposals for improvement of air-sea rescue services with the observation, "A country which has been spending close to $2 billion on defence each year should also be prepared to spend a few million dollars in defence of our seamen's lives."

The campaign was given tragic emphasis in July when the longliner *Unimak* capsized off Roberts Creek on the Sechelt Peninsula after striking the towline of the *Cape Flattery,* taking the lives of three fishermen and a woman passenger. The confusion attending the vain attempts to rescue two of the fishermen trapped in the hull of the capsized vessel showed the need for coordinated coast guard organization — and once more it illustrated the callous attitude of a provincial government which refused to extend compulsory compensation coverage to all fishermen, for none of the three fishermen drowned had compensation coverage.

In September the federal government announced formation of a coast guard under the Canadian Marine Service, coordinating transport and other existing federal vessels with RCAF air-sea rescue services and bolstering the organization with six new vessels ranging in length from 75 to 125 feet, two each for the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and the Great Lakes.

Formation of the coast guard organization was indeed a tribute to the effectiveness of the campaign waged by the UFAWU, its women's auxiliaries and other maritime organizations, although, as the UFAWU pointed out, the new service still fell short of meeting the need adequately.

At its 1965 convention it defined what it meant by adequate service — the addition of at least four 150-foot vessels and five helicopters to be stationed at strategic points along the coast. This need for reinforcement and expansion of the service into a fully fledged coast guard remains and the UFAWU and other maritime unions, whose members' lives depend upon the adequacy of the service, cannot be satisfied until their demands have been met.

Such campaigns, and there have been many on a wide range of issues over the years, have given the UFAWU a reputation for militancy which springs both from the nature of the industry and its domination by a powerful monopoly.

Problems posed by industrial development and pollution compel the union to engage in a constant campaign for the protection of salmon spawning grounds and its concomittant, the rehabilitation of salmon runs

decimated by the reckless exploitation of past decades. Some of the anti-pollution campaigns are only local in scope; others are international in their ramifications.

Whether it is a campaign to establish fishing limits and assure Canadian fishermen of their exclusive rights within those limits, to assert Canada's rights to Fraser River salmon runs and phase out U.S. claims to those runs, or to conclude international treaties protecting the salmon and halibut stocks which have provided British Columbia with its traditional fisheries, the UFAWU finds itself of necessity involved in high international politics.

These are struggles in which the union has been engaged throughout its history that arise from the nature of the industry. But there are others that spring directly from the control of the industry by the B.C. Packers — Canadian Fishing Company monopoly and its political influence in shaping legislation to serve its own interests.

Licence limitation is a case in point. For many years canners held virtually complete control over licensing in the central and northern areas, using their power to hold down prices and reap maximum profits. They set overall quotas and arranged boat ratings within these limits. Generally their policy became one of encouraging almost unrestricted entry into the salmon fishery by financing fishermen to control their catches. The result was increasing over-capitalization of the salmon fleet, with "too many boats chasing too few fish."

The compelling force of UFAWU arguments for licence limitation led to the appointment of Prof. Sol Sinclair as a one man commission of inquiry in 1958 and his report, published in 1960, concurred in the need for licence limitation as advanced by the UFAWU while differing with the union on the method.

In its long advocacy of licence limitation, the UFAWU has always maintained the principle that the licence should be placed on the fisherman, not the vessel. The fishing companies have consistently opposed this concept because they have their own considerable investment in boats and operate on the premise that control of the boat facilitates control of the fisherman.

The Trudeau Liberal government's Salmon Vessel Licence Limitation Program, known throughout the in-

dustry as the Davis Plan after Jack Davis, who, as minister of fisheries, introduced it in 1968, was diametrically opposed in principle to the plan advanced by the UFAWU. It placed the licence on the vessel — "the thing, not the man," as Davis himself defined it.

The fishing companies had good reason to give the plan their prompt approval. It enhanced the value of their rental fleets, gave them control of a substantial number of licences and permitted them to continue control of production through their financing of fishermen's boats and gear.

Fishermen, in the great majority, opposed the plan from the outset even before its full impact became apparent as the various phases were announced. In mass meetings called by the union at Steveston and other centres, which Davis refused to attend, they condemned the plan. But when he appeared before union conventions, Davis flatly told critical delegates that he had no intention of changing the principle of his plan — "the thing, not the man" — no matter what their opposition.

The union too, has maintained its position that the Davis Plan must be scrapped in its entirety and replaced by one placing the licence on the fisherman, not the boat. The union's original plan called for a five-year moratorium on issuance of new licences, during which licensed fishermen would be required to show they were obtaining a progressively higher percentage of their earnings from fishing; establishment of a waiting list for licences vacated by retirement or death; elimination of company ownership and financial control of fishing vessels, and special protection for Native Indian fishermen. This essentially remains the union's position, substantiated by the evidence that the capital value of the salmon fleet has increased rather than decreased under the Davis Plan and its catching efficiency is greater than ever.

8. What of the Future?

As the story unfolded in these pages shows, the pioneers of trade union organization in British Columbia's fishing industry were concerned largely with increasing fishermen's earnings through higher prices for the fish they landed.

In the early years of the century the salmon runs seemed limitless, governed only by the vagaries of ocean survival. The canners operated with a prodigal attitude to the fish they processed, compelling the fishermen to dump their fish when catches exceeded their needs and ignoring even the primitive conservation practised by the Native Indians. If the runs to a stream were destroyed, the loss was considered inconsequential to the whole.

But as the century advanced, decimation and destruction of runs in many parts of the coast, accelerated by reckless logging and mining operations and expanding industrial development, compelled fishermen's unions to become guardians of the resource upon which their members depended for a livelihood.

From the outset, the UFAWU found itself engaged in campaigns on many fronts — against removal of gravel

and for clearance of logging debris from salmon streams; against discharge of sewage and industrial wastes into rivers; against the U.S. H-bomb tests in the Pacific with their radiation hazard to marine life; against the proposed transportation of oil by supertankers plying between Valdez, Alaska and Cherry Point, Washington . . . the list is long.

Again, in the opening decades of the century Canadian and American fishermen had the northeast Pacific to themselves, with little threat of intrusion by the fishing fleets of other countries.

Now the huge trawl fleets of Japan and the Soviet Union, and inevitably other countries are fishing off the Pacific coast of Canada and the United States. For Canadian fishermen this poses the dual need to extend the country's fishing jurisdiction to the limit of the continental shelf and to acquire the capacity for development of new fisheries on stocks not being utilized.

As early as 1946 the UFAWU was campaigning for the 12-mile limit, calling on the federal government to establish offshore fishing zones over which Canada would have full jurisdiction. And throughout the slow evolution of federal policy from the three-mile territorial waters limit, through the inner six-mile territorial waters and outer six-mile fishing limits, to the 12-mile territorial waters limit drawn from baselines enclosing Queen Charlotte Sound, Hecate Strait and Dixon Entrance on the Pacific coast, the union's policy has been derived from the need to assure Canadian fishermen of the exclusive right to exploit their offshore fisheries to the fullest extent.

At the same time as it has been compelled to fight on many fronts for protection of the resource, the UFAWU has been engaged in constant struggle to wrest fair earnings for its members from the monopoly which has absorbed all except a few small companies in fastening itself upon the industry.

Learning from the unity of the whites, Native Indians and fishermen of Japanese origin which made the Fraser River fishermen's strikes of 1900-01 outstanding struggles, and from the division between whites and fishermen of Japanese extraction which hampered fishermen's struggles in the thirties, the UFAWU has successfully withstood all

attempts to destroy it because it has made unity of all fishing industry workers on the basis of full equality its guiding principle.

The principle is embodied in the clause of the union's constitution according membership to "any person, male or female, regardless of race, religious or political opinion, employed in any of the various operations over which the union has jurisdiction . . ." It is strengthened by the union's industrial form of organization, eliminating the organization by gear of earlier unions, a form which made it easier for the fishing companies to foster gear conflicts and exploit them to their greater profit.

Denied recognition in law, the UFAWU has won recognition in fact from a fishing monopoly which has argued contradictorily that fishermen come under federal jurisdiction to forestall provincial legislation and that they come under provincial jurisdiction in its court challenge of the Canada Labor Code which went into effect on March 1, 1973.

The issue was summarized in these words by *The Fisherman* in its issue of February 2, 1973:

"Eighty years ago this spring, salmon fishermen organized their first union, the Fraser River Fishermen's Benevolent Association which changed its name to the Fraser River Fishermen's Protective Union in the course of the struggle that led to strike in mid-July, 1893.

"In one form or another at various centres along the coast, sometimes weak, sometimes strong but always divided until formation of the UFAWU in 1945 united all gears, salmon fishermen have maintained a continuity of organization over eight decades.

"Salmon canners denounced the first union in 1893 as a 'combination or conspiracy to raise wages.' That essentially was the fishing companies' contention when they instigated the attack on the UFAWU under the Combines Investigation Act in 1956. From that long struggle organized fishermen secured the right by special act of parliament to bargain collectively with the companies for minimum salmon prices — but they still lack labor representational rights other than those enforced in practice by their own strength.

"In law, small boat fishermen are still entrepreneurs,

denied their status as workers under all except the Unemployment Insurance Act, and even that is constantly threatened. Although amendments to the Canada Labor Code which go into effect March 1 confer labor representational rights on crew members working for shares, small boat fishermen, who constitute the large majority, are still excluded.

"Organized fishermen have the right to expect the Barrett government to bring in legislation giving all fishermen the same representational rights as other workers. Regardless of the outcome of any federal-provincial dispute over jurisdiction, should there be a challenge to either federal or provincial law, this will rectify a continuing injustice. Eighty years is a long time to wait."

Seven months later, in its issue of September 7, 1973, the paper added this comment:

"Last week the fishing monopolies, as exemplified in this province by B.C. Packers and Canadian Fishing Company, launched their anticipated constitutional challenge to have the provisions of the new Canada Labor Code extending bargaining rights to some fishermen declared ultra vires of the federal parliament. Having failed in their campaign to exclude all fishermen from the labor code, despite intensive lobbying on Parliament Hill by the Fisheries Council of Canada, the fishing monopolies are asking the courts to sustain their own adamant opposition to bargaining rights for fishermen, just as they have used the courts all down the years to smash strikes and deny fishermen elementary social justice.

"Their contention is that inclusion of some fishermen in the labor code invades their 'property and civil rights,' which lie in the jurisdiction of the province. Their intent is to use this constitutional ploy to prolong their privileged position in which their 'property and civil rights' have all the protection of law and fishermen have only the de facto protection of their own organized strength. What the fishing companies fear most is that ultimately the limited rights under the labor code will be widened to include all fishermen, as indeed they should."

And ultimately, no matter how the fishing companies

strive to maintain the outworn concept of a past century, fishermen will win recognition in law of their full status as workers — a recognition they won long ago from their fellow workers across the country.

From small beginnings, the organized workers of British Columbia's fishing industry have grown in strength and influence to the point where they now are affiliated to the B.C. Federation of Labor and the Canadian Labor Congress, exchange delegations with the Food Workers Union of the USSR, have fraternal ties with fishermen's unions in other countries, and send observers to the congresses of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

As it marches into the seventies, a century after establishment of the first salmon canning operations on the Fraser River, the UFAWU carries forward a proud tradition rooted in the frontier days of the province.

Nonetheless, with all its achievements, the union's purpose of uniting all fishing industry workers remains incomplete so long as there are groups of fishermen outside its ranks.

Although many Natives wear its button, it still must prove to other Natives that, as working fishermen, their place is with their fellow fishermen and that, far from detracting from their own aspirations, membership in a union which has been foremost in championing Native rights will advance their cause.

The greatest obstacle to economic and social justice for all fishermen is the monopoly which distorts the development of the fishing industry in its insatiable quest for profits, whether it be in cannery closures depriving Natives of their traditional livelihood or in the manipulation of vessel financing and licensing to perpetuate its control of production.

In the wider context of the popular struggle, and labor's decisive role in that struggle, to free the country from monopoly control and open the way to social advance, British Columbia's organized fishing industry workers face the necessity of fighting for the nationalization of the fishing industry. It is an inherent part of the fight to end foreign domination of the country's economy, to regain Canada's independence, to restore what essentially is a public resource to the people.